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THE DREAM,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY *Caroline (Sheidan)*
THE HON^{BLE.} MRS. NORTON.

DEDICATED TO HER GRACE
THE DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND.

3
“ We have one human heart,—
All mortal thoughts confess a common home.”
Shelley.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1841.

No. 2.



PR 5112
.N5 1841
copy 2

LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,
Stamford Street.

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PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

CALLED upon by my Publisher to prepare, somewhat hurriedly, for a Second Edition of the present volume, I have endeavoured to avail myself (as far as the time would permit) of various corrections and alterations suggested to me by known and unknown friends, in the hope of rendering my book as worthy as possible of the indulgence with which it has been received.

Unable in any other manner to acknowledge the numerous communications which have reached me on the subject of the principal Poem, I beg here to offer my thanks to the Writers, and more especially to the Critic who, signing himself Amicus, has nevertheless left me in doubt as to *which* of my old friends and most agreeable companions I have ungratefully forgotten in his person.

Though I have not been able, at this moment, to follow all the hints I have received, I trust hereafter to prove that none of them have been thrown away.

The present volume includes a reprint of a short poem, entitled "A Voice from the Factories," which appeared in 1836, under the auspices of my good friend Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, who undertook to publish it without my name. To that anonymous edition a Preface was appended in the form of an introductory letter addressed to Lord Ashley, which now, in its altered form, I have seen reason to omit; claiming permission only to retain, in the Dedication, a name which, to its eternal honour, can never be disconnected from the subject, nor from the memory of earnest and increasingly successful efforts in behalf of the feeble and friendless.

A compliment has been lately paid me on the other side of the Atlantic, which I confess I have received very unwillingly. I allude to the reprinting of my published poem in an American paper—a huge mammoth, a very boa-constrictor of a paper—which has contrived to swallow it all. Now, anxious as I naturally am to become acquainted with, and popular among, my friends in "the

Far West," yet, if it so pleased them, I could wish to be more formally introduced. I would fain not appear before BRYANT'S countrymen and fellow-citizens in such a very careless undress; indeed, this sort of dealing is hard, both as respects Author and Publisher, in England: hard on the Author, who has no opportunity of revising and correcting the errors of his work, and trebly hard on the Publisher, who sees a copyright, which is his private property, most unceremoniously appropriated, just after he has probably been at considerable expense to produce the work in what he considers a fitting manner.

Of a still more equivocal nature is the compliment (if compliment it can be called) of printing and publishing poems as mine, which are not from my pen, and of whose authorship I know nothing (which is the mode adopted by the Editor of the "New World"). These poems may be as good, or better than those which I am in the habit of writing, but they are *not mine*, and therefore I would rather they were not attributed to me. Moreover, the "Melancholy Musings" given to me, by no means express my real sentiments. I am thankful to say that I still believe in "Love" and "Friendship" quite as firmly as in the outset of my life; and that, far from taking that

saucily high tone with the "meteor, Fame," and treating her with a sort of despairing contempt, I am reasonably anxious that what I write should be read and approved of; willing to take all pains to attain that desirable end; and at this moment full of hope and interest respecting the success of this very volume, and the chance of my having, perhaps, to correct a *third* edition, through the indulgence of my readers.

London, 29th October, 1840.

DEDICATION.

TO

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND.

ONCE more, my harp ! once more, although I thought
Never to wake thy silent strings again,
A wandering dream thy gentle chords have wrought,
And my sad heart, which long hath dwelt in pain,
Soars, like a wild bird from a cypress bough,
Into the poet's Heaven, and leaves dull grief below !

And unto Thee—the beautiful and pure—
Whose lot is cast amid that busy world
Where only sluggish Dulness dwells secure,
And Fancy's generous wing is faintly furl'd ;
To thee—whose friendship kept its equal truth
Through the most dreary hour of my embitter'd youth—

I dedicate the lay. Ah! never bard,
In days when Poverty was twin with song;
Nor wandering harper, lonely and ill-starr'd,
Cheer'd by some castle's chief, and harbour'd long;
Not Scott's "Last Minstrel," in his trembling lays,
Woke with a warmer heart the earnest meed of praise!

For easy are the alms the rich man spares
To sons of Genius, by misfortune bent,
But thou gav'st *me*, what woman seldom dares,
Belief—in spite of many a cold dissent—
When, slandered and maligned, I stood apart,
From those whose bounded power, hath wrung, not crushed,
my heart.

Then, then, when cowards lied away my name,
And scoff'd to see me feebly stem the tide;
When some were kind on whom I had no claim,
And some forsook on whom my love relied,
And some, who *might* have battled for my sake,
Stood off in doubt to see what turn "the world" would take—

Thou gavest me that the poor do give the poor,
Kind words, and holy wishes, and true tears;
The loved, the near of kin, could do no more,
Who changed not with the gloom of varying years,
But clung the closer when I stood forlorn,
And blunted Slander's dart with their indignant scorn.

For they who credit crime are they who feel
Their *own* hearts weak to unresisted sin;
Mem'ry, not judgment, prompts the thoughts which steal
O'er minds like these, an easy faith to win;
And tales of broken truth are still believed
Most readily by those who have *themselves* deceived.

But, like a white swan down a troubled stream,
Whose ruffling pinion hath the power to fling
Aside the turbid drops which darkly gleam
And mar the freshness of her snowy wing,—
So Thou, with queenly grace and gentle pride,
Along the world's dark waves in purity dost glide;

Thy pale and pearly cheek was never made
To crimson with a faint false-hearted shame ;
Thou didst not shrink,—of bitter tongues afraid,
Who hunt in packs the object of their blame ;
To Thee the sad denial still held true,
For from thine own good thoughts thy heart its mercy
drew.

And, though my faint and tributary rhymes
Add nothing to the glory of thy day,
Yet every Poet *hopes* that after-times
Shall set some value on his votive lay,—
And I would fain one gentle deed record
Among the many such with which thy life is stored.

So, when these lines, made in a mournful hour,
Are idly open'd to the Stranger's eye,
A dream of THEE, aroused by Fancy's power,
Shall be the first to wander floating by ;
And they who never saw thy lovely face,
Shall pause,—to conjure up a vision of its grace !

THE DREAM.

THE DREAM.

'Twas summer eve; the changeful beams still play'd
On the fir-bark and through the beechen shade;
Still with soft crimson glow'd each floating cloud;
Still the stream glitter'd where the willow bow'd;
Still the pale moon sate silent and alone,
Nor yet the stars had rallied round her throne;
Those diamond courtiers, who, while yet the West
Wears the red shield above his dying breast,
Dare not assume the loss they all desire,
Nor pay their homage to the fainter fire,
But wait in trembling till the Sun's fair light
Fading, shall leave them free to welcome Night!

So when some Chief, whose name through realms afar
Was still the watchword of successful war,

Met by the fatal hour which waits for all,
Is, on the field he rallied, forced to fall,
The conquerors pause to watch his parting breath,
Awed by the terrors of that mighty death ;
Nor dare the meed of victory to claim,
Nor lift the standard to a meaner name,
Till every spark of soul hath ebb'd away,
Leaving, what was a hero, common clay !

Oh! Twilight! Spirit that dost render birth
To dim enchantments; melting Heaven with Earth,
Leaving on craggy hills and running streams
A softness like the atmosphere of dreams ;
Thy hour to all is welcome ! Faint and sweet
Thy light falls round the peasant's homeward feet,
Who, slow returning from his task of toil,
Sees the low sunset gild the cultured soil,
And, tho' such radiance round him brightly glows,
Marks the small spark his cottage window throws.
Still as his heart forestals his weary pace,
Fondly he dreams of each familiar face,
Recalls the treasures of his narrow life,
His rosy children, and his sunburnt wife,

To whom *his* coming is the chief event
Of simple days in cheerful labour spent.
The rich man's chariot hath gone whirling past,
And those poor cottagers have only cast
One careless glance on all that show of pride,
Then to their tasks turn'd quietly aside ;
But *him* they wait for, him they welcome home,
Fixed sentinels look forth to see him come ;
The fagot sent for when the fire grew dim,
The frugal meal prepared, are all for him ;
For him the watching of that sturdy boy,
For him those smiles of tenderness and joy,
For him,—who plods his sauntering way along,
Whistling the fragment of some village song !

Dear art thou to the lover, thou sweet light,
Fair fleeting sister of the mournful night!
As in impatient hope he stands apart,
Companion'd only by his beating heart,
And with an eager fancy oft beholds
The vision of a white robe's fluttering folds
Flit through the grove, and gain the open mead,
True to the hour by loving hearts agreed !

At length she comes. The evening's holy grace
Mellows the glory of her radiant face ;
The curtain of that daylight faint and pale
Hangs round her like the shrouding of a veil ;
As, turning with a bashful timid thought,
From the dear welcome she herself hath sought,
Her shadowy profile drawn against the sky
Cheats, while it charms, his fond adoring eye.

Oh ! dear to him, to all, since first the flowers
Of happy Eden's consecrated bowers
Heard the low breeze along the branches play,
And God's voice bless the cool hour of the day. (1)
For though that glorious Paradise be lost,
Though earth by blighting storms be roughly cross'd,
Though the long curse demands the tax of sin,
And the day's sorrows with the day begin,
That hour, once sacred to God's presence, still
Keeps itself calmer from the touch of ill,
The holiest hour of earth. *Then* toil doth cease—
Then from the yoke the oxen find release—
Then man rests pausing from his many cares,
And the world teems with children's sunset prayers ;

Then innocent things seek out their quiet rest,
The babe sinks slumbering on its mother's breast ;
The birds beneath their leafy covering creep,
Yea, even the flowers fold up their buds in sleep ;
And angels, floating by, on radiant wings,
Hear the low sounds the breeze of evening brings,
Catch the sweet incense as it floats along,
The infant's prayer, the mother's cradle-song,
And bear the holy gifts to realms afar,
As things too sacred for this fallen star.

At such an hour, on such a summer night,
Silent and calm in its transparent light,
A widow'd parent watch'd her slumbering child,
On whose young face the sixteenth summer smiled.
Fair was the face she watch'd ! Nor less, because
Beauty's perfection seem'd to make a pause,
And wait, on that smooth brow, some further touch,
Some spell from Time,—the great magician,—such
As calls the closed bud out of hidden gloom,
And bids it wake to glory, light, and bloom.
Girlish as yet, but with the gentle grace
Of a young fawn in its low resting-place,

Her folded limbs were lying : from her hand
A group of wild-flowers,—Nature's brightest band,
Of all that laugh along the Summer fields,
Of all the sunny hedge-row freely yields,
Of all that in the wild-wood darkly hide,
Or on the thyme-bank wave in breezy pride,—
Show'd, that the weariness which closed in sleep
So tranquil, child-like, innocent, and deep,
Nor festal gaiety, nor toilsome hours,
Had brought ; but, like a flower among the flowers,
She had been wandering 'neath the Summer sky,
Youth on her lip and gladness in her eye,
Twisting the wild rose from its native thorn,
And the blue scabious from the sunny corn ;
Smiling and singing like a spirit fair
That walk'd the world, but had no dwelling there.
And still (as though their faintly-scented breath
Preserv'd a meek fidelity in death)
Each late imprison'd blossom fondly lingers
Within the touch of her unconscious fingers,
Though, languidly unclasp'd, that hand no more
Guards its possession of the rifled store.

So wearily she lay ; so sweetly slept ;
So by her side fond watch the mother kept ;
And, as above her gentle child she bent,
So like they seem'd in form and lineament,
You might have deem'd her face its shadow gave
To the clear mirror of a fountain's wave ;
Only in this they differ'd ; that, while one
Was warm and radiant as the Summer sun,
The other's smile had more a moonlight play,
For many tears had wept its glow away ;
Yet was she fair ; of loveliness so true,
That time, which faded, never could subdue :
And though the sleeper, like a half-blown rose,
Show'd bright as angels in her soft repose,
Though bluer veins ran through each snowy lid,
Curtaining sweet eyes, by long dark lashes hid—
Eyes that as yet had never learnt to weep,
But woke up smiling, like a child's, from sleep ;—
Though fainter lines were pencill'd on the brow,
Which cast soft shadow on the orbs below ;
Though deeper colour flush'd her youthful cheek,
In its smooth curve more joyous and less meek,
And fuller seem'd the small and crimson mouth,
With teeth like those that glitter in the South,—

She had but youth's superior brightness, such
As the skill'd painter gives with flattering touch
When he would picture every lingering grace
Which once shone brighter in some copied face ;
And it was compliment, whene'er she smiled,
To say, "Thou 'rt like thy mother, my fair child !"

Sweet is the image of the brooding dove!—
Holy as Heaven a mother's tender love !
The love of many prayers and many tears,
Which changes not with dim declining years,—
The *only* love which on this teeming earth
Asks no return from Passion's wayward birth ;
The only love that, with a touch divine,
Displaces from the heart's most secret shrine
The idol SELF. Oh ! prized beneath thy due
When life's untried affections all are new,—
Love, from whose calmer hope and holier rest
(Like a fledged bird, impatient of the nest)
The human heart, rebellious, springs to seek
Delights more vehement, in ties more weak ;
How strange to us appears, in after-life,
That term of mingled carelessness and strife,

When guardianship so gentle gall'd our pride,
When it was holiday to leave thy side,
When, with dull ignorance that *would not* learn,
We lost those hours that never can return—
Hours, whose most sweet communion Nature meant
Should be in confidence and kindness spent,
That we (hereafter mourning) might believe
In human faith, though all around deceive ;
Might weigh against the sad and startling crowd
Of ills which wound the weak and chill the proud,
Of woes 'neath which (despite of stubborn will,
Philosophy's vain boast, and erring skill)
The strong heart downward like a willow bends,
Failure of love,—and treachery of friends,—
Our recollections of the undefiled,
The sainted tie, of parent and of child !

Oh ! happy days ! Oh years that glided by,
Scarce chronicled by one poor passing sigh !
When the dark storm sweeps past us, and the soul
Struggles with fainting strength to reach the goal ;
When the false baits that lured us only cloy,
What would we give to grasp your vanish'd joy !

From the cold quicksands of Life's treacherous shore
The backward light our anxious eyes explore,
Measure the miles our wandering feet have come,
Sinking heart-weary, far away from home,
Recall the voice that whisper'd love and peace,
The smile that bid our early sorrows cease,
And long to bow our grieving heads, and weep
Low on the gentle breast that lull'd us first to sleep!

Ah! bless'd are they for whom 'mid all their pains
That faithful and unalter'd love remains ;
Who, Life wreck'd round them,—hunted from their rest,—
And, by all else forsaken or distress'd,—
Claim, in *one* heart, their sanctuary and shrine—
As I, my Mother, claim'd my place in thine!

Oft, since that hour, in sadness I retrace
My childhood's vision of thy calm sweet face ;
Oft see thy form, its mournful beauty shrouded
In thy black weeds, and coif of widow's woe ;
Thy dark expressive eyes all dim and clouded
By that deep wretchedness the lonely know :

Stiffing thy grief, to hear some weary task
 Conn'd by unwilling lips, with listless air,
Hoarding thy means, lest future need might ask
 More than the widow's pittance then could spare.
Hidden, forgotten by the great and gay,
 Enduring sorrow, not by fits and starts,
But the long self-denial, day by day,
 Alone amidst thy brood of careless hearts!
Striving to guide, to teach, or to restrain
 The young rebellious spirits crowding round,
Who saw not, knew not, felt not for thy pain,
 And could not comfort—yet had power to wound!
Ah! how my selfish heart, which since hath grown
Familiar with deep trials of its own,
With riper judgment looking to the past,
Regrets the careless days that flew so fast,
Stamps with remorse each wasted hour of time,
And darkens every folly into crime!

Warriors and statesmen have their meed of praise,
 And what they do or suffer men record;
But the long sacrifice of woman's days
 Passes without a thought—without a word;

And many a holy struggle for the sake
Of duties sternly, faithfully fulfill'd,—
For which the anxious mind must watch and wake,
And the strong feelings of the heart be still'd,—
Goes by unheeded as the summer wind,
And leaves no memory and no trace behind!
Yet, it may be, more lofty courage dwells
In one meek heart which braves an adverse fate,
Than his, whose ardent soul indignant swells
Warm'd by the fight, or cheer'd through high debate:
The Soldier dies surrounded;—could he *live*
Alone to suffer, and alone to strive?

Answer, ye graves, whose suicidal gloom
Shows deeper horror than a common tomb!
Who sleep within? The men who would evade
An unseen lot of which they felt afraid.
Embarrassment of means, which work'd annoy,—
A past remorse,—a future blank of joy,—
The sinful rashness of a blind despair,—
These were the strokes which sent your victims there.

In many a village churchyard's simple grave,
Where all unmark'd the cypress-branches wave;

In many a vault where Death could only claim
The brief inscription of a woman's name ;
Of different ranks, and different degrees,
From daily labour to a life of ease,
(From the rich wife who through the weary day
Wept in her jewels, grief's unceasing prey,
To the poor soul who trudged o'er marsh and moor,
And with her baby begg'd from door to door,—)
Lie hearts, which, ere they found that last release,
Had known no nights of rest, no days of peace ;
Hearts, whose long struggle through unpitied years
None saw but He who marks the mourner's tears ;
The obscurely noble ! who evaded not
The woe which He had will'd should be their lot,
But nerved themselves to bear !

Of such art thou,

My Mother ! With thy calm and holy brow,
And high devoted heart, which suffer'd still
Unmurmuring, through each degree of ill.
And, because Fate hath will'd that mine should be
A Poet's soul (at least in my degree),—
And that my verse would faintly shadow forth
What I have seen of pure unselfish worth,—

Therefore I speak of Thee ; that those who read
That trust in woman, which is still my creed,
Thy early-widow'd image may recall
And greet thy nature as the type of all !

Enough ! With eyes of fond unwearied love
The Mother of my story watch'd above
Her sleeping child ; and, as she views the grace
And blushing beauty of that girlish face,
Her thoughts roam back through change of time and tide,
Since first Heaven sent the blessing by her side.

In that sweet vision she again receives

The snow-white cradle, where that tiny head
Lay, like a small bud folded in its leaves,
Foster'd with dew by tears of fondness shed ;
Each infantine event, each dangerous hour
Which pass'd with threatening o'er its fragile form,
Her hope, her anguish, as the tender flower
Bloom'd to the sun, or sicken'd in the storm,
In memory's magic mirror glide along,
And scarce she notes the different scene around,
And scarce her lips refrain the cradle-song
Which sooth'd that infant with its lulling sound !

But the dream changes ; quiet years roll on ;
That dawn of frail existence fleets away,
And she beholds beneath the summer sun
A blessed sight ; a little child at play.
The soft light falls upon its golden hair,
And shows a brow intelligently mild ;
No more a cipher in this world of care,
Love cheers and chides that happy conscious child.
No more unheeding of her watchful love,
Pride to excel, its docile spirit stirs ;
Regret and hope its tiny bosom move,
And looks of fondness brightly answer hers ;
O'er the green meadow, and the broomy hill,
In restless joy it bounds and darts along ;
Or through the breath of evening, low and still,
Carols with mirthful voice its welcome song.

Again the vision changes ; from her view
The CHILD'S dear love and antic mirth are gone ;
But, in their stead, with cheek of roseate hue,
And fair slight form, and low and silvery tone,
Rises the sweetest spirit Thought can call
From memory's distant worlds—the fairy GIRL ;

Whose heart her childish pleasures still enthrall,
Whose unbound hair still floats in careless curl,
But in whose blue and meekly lifted eyes,
And in whose shy, though sweet and cordial smile,
And in whose changeful blushes, dimly rise
Shadows and lights that were not seen erewhile :
Shadows and lights that speak of woman's love,
Of all that makes or mars her fate below ;
Mysterious prophecies, which Time must prove
More bright in glory, or more dark with woe !
And that soft vision also wanders by,
Melting in fond and innocent smiles away,
Till the loved REAL meets the watchful eye
Of her who thus recall'd a former day ;
The gentle daughter, for whose precious sake
Her widow'd heart had struggled with its pain,
And still through lonely grief refused to break,
Because *that* tie to Earth did yet remain.
Now, as she fondly gazed, a few meek tears
Stole down her cheek ; for she that slumber'd there,
The beautiful, the loved of many years,
A bride betroth'd must leave her fostering care ;
Woo'd in another's home apart to dwell,—
Oh ! might that other love but half as well !

As if the mournful wish had touch'd her heart,
The slumbering maiden woke, with sudden start ;
Turn'd, with a dazzled and intense surprise,
On that fond face her bright, bewilder'd eyes ;
Gazed round on each familiar object near,
As though she doubted yet if sense was clear ;
Cover'd her brow and sigh'd, as though to wake
Had power some spell of happy thought to break ;
Then murmur'd, in a low and earnest tone,
“ Oh ! is that blessed dream for ever gone ? ”

Strange is the power of dreams ! Who hath not felt,
When in the morning light such visions melt,
How the veil'd soul, though struggling to be free,
Ruled by that deep, unfathom'd mystery,
Wakes, haunted by the thoughts of good or ill,
Whose shadowy influence pursues us still ?

Sometimes remorse doth weigh our spirits down ;
Some crime committed earns Heaven's angriest frown ;
Some awful sin, in which the tempted heart
Hath scarce, perhaps, forborne its waking part,

Brings dreams of judgment ; loud the thunders roll,
The heavens shrink blacken'd like a flaming scroll ;
We faint, we die, beneath the avenging rod,
And vainly hide from our offended God.
For oh ! though Fancy change our mortal lot,
And rule our slumbers, CONSCIENCE sleepeth not ;
That strange sad dial, by its own true light,
Points to our thoughts, how dark soe'er the night,
Still by our pillow watchful guard it keeps,
And bids the sinner tremble while he sleeps.

Sometimes, with fearful dangers doom'd to cope,
'Reft of each wild and visionary hope,
Stabb'd with a thousand wounds, we struggle still,
The hand that tortures, powerless to kill.
Sometimes 'mid ocean storms, in fearful strife,
We stem the wave, and shrieking, gasp for life,
While crowding round us, faces rise and gleam,
Some known and loved, some, pictures of our dream ;
High on the buoyant waters wildly toss'd—
Low in its foaming caverns darkly lost—
Those flitting forms the dangerous hour partake,
Cling to our aid, or suffer for our sake.

Conscious of present life, the slumbering soul
Still floats us onward, as the billows roll,
Till, snatch'd from death, we seem to touch the strand,
Rise on the shoreward wave, and dash to land!
Alone we come: the forms whose wild array
Gleam'd round us while we struggled, fade away,—
We know not, reck not, who the danger shared,
But, vaguely dreaming, feel that *we* are spared.

Sometimes a grief, of fond affection born,
Gnaws at our heart, and bids us weep till morn;
Some anguish, copied from our waking fears,
Wakes the eternal fount of human tears,
Sends us to watch some vision'd bed of death,
Hold the faint hand, and catch the parting breath,
Where those we prized the most, and loved the best,
Seem darkly sinking to the grave's long rest;
Lo! in our arms they fade, they faint, they die,
Before our eyes the funeral train sweeps by;
We hear the orphan's sob—the widow's wail—
O'er our dim senses woeful thoughts prevail,
Till, with a burst of grief, the spell we break,
And, weeping for th' imagined loss, awake.

Ah me! from dreams like these aroused at length,
How leaps the spirit to its former strength!
What memories crowd the newly conscious brain,
What gleams of rapture, and what starts of pain!
Till from the soul the heavy mists stand clear,
All wanes and fades that seem'd so darkly drear,
The sun's fair rays those shades of death destroy,
And passionate thankfulness and tears of joy
Swell at our hearts, as, gazing on his beam,
We start, and cry aloud, "Thank Heaven, 'twas but a
dream!"

But there are visions of a fairer kind,
Thoughts fondly cherish'd by the slumbering mind,
Which, when they vanish from the waking brain,
We close our eyes, and long to dream again.
Their dim voice calls to our forsaken side
Those who betray'd us, seeming true and tried;
Those whom the fast receding waves of time
Have floated from us; those who in the prime
And glory of our young life's eagle flight
Shone round like rays, encircling us with light,
And gave the bright similitude of truth
To fair illusions—vanish'd with our youth.

They bring again the tryst of early love,
(That passionate hope, all other hopes above!)
Bid the pale hair, long shrouded in the grave,
Round the young head in floating ringlets wave,
And fill the air with echoes. Gentle words,
Low laughter, and the singing of sweet birds,
Come round us then; and drooping of light boughs,
Whose shadow could not cool our burning brows,
And lilac-blossoms, scenting the warm air,
And long laburnums, fragile, bright, and fair;
And murmuring breezes through the green leaves straying,
And rippling waters in the sunshine playing,
All that around our slumbering sense can fling
The glory of some half-forgotten spring!
They bring again the fond approving gaze
Of old true friends, who mingled love with praise;
When Fame (that cold bright guiding-star below)
Took from affection's light a borrow'd glow,—
And, strong in all the might of earnest thought,
Through the long studious night untired we wrought,
That others might the morning hour beguile,
With the fond triumph of their wondering smile.
What though those dear approving smiles be gone,
What though we strive neglected and alone,

What though no voice *now* mourns our hope's alloy,
Nor in the hour of triumph gives us joy?
In *dreams* the days return when this was not,
When strong affection sooth'd our toilsome lot :
Cheer'd, loved, admonish'd, lauded, we aspire,
And the sick soul regains its former fire.

Beneath the influence of this fond spell,
Happy, contented, bless'd, we seem to dwell ;
Sweet faces shine with love's own tender ray,
Which frown, or coldly turn from us, by day ;
The lonely orphan hears a parent's voice ;
Sad childless mothers once again rejoice ;
The poor deserted seems a happy bride ;
And the long parted wander side by side.

Ah, vain deceit ! Awaking with a start,
Sick grow the beatings of the troubled heart ;
Silence, like some dark mantle, drops around,
Quenching th' imagined voice's welcome sound ;
Again the soul repeats its old farewells,
Again recalls sad hours and funeral knells ;

Again, as daylight opens on their view,
 The orphan shrinks, the mother mourns anew ;
 Till clear we feel, as fades the morning star,
 How left, how lonely, how oppress'd we are!

And other dreams exist, more vague and bright
 Than MEMORY ever brought to cheer the night ;—
 Most to the young and happy do they come,
 To those who know no shelter but of home ;
 To those of whom the inspired writer spoke,
 When from his lips the words prophetic broke,
 Which (conscious of the strong and credulous spell
 Experience only in the heart can quell)
 Promised the nearer glimpse of perfect truth
 Not to cold wisdom, but to fervent youth ;
 Each, in their measure, caught its fitful gleams,—
 The young saw visions, and the old dream'd dreams. (2)

The young ! Oh ! what should wandering fancy bring
 In life's first spring-time but the thoughts of spring ?
 Worlds without winter, blooming amaranth bowers,
 Garlands of brightness wreath'd from changeless flowers ;

Where shapes like angels wander to and fro,
Unwing'd, but glorious, in the noontide glow,
Which steeps the hills, the dales, the earth, the sea,
In one soft flood of golden majesty.
In this world,—so create,—no sighs nor tears,—
No sadness brought with lapse of varying years,—
No cold betrayal of the trusting heart,—
No knitting up of love fore-doom'd to part,—
No pain, deformity, nor pale disease,—
No wars,—no tyranny,—no fears that freeze
The rapid current of the restless blood,—
Nor effort scorn'd,—nor act misunderstood,—
No dark remorse for ever-haunting sin,—
But all at peace without—at rest within ;
And hopes which gild Thought's wildest waking hours,
Scatter'd around us carelessly as flowers.

Oh ! Paradise, in vain didst thou depart ;
Thine image still is stamp'd on every heart !
Though mourning man in vain may seek to trace
The site of that which *was* his dwelling-place,
Though the four glittering rivers *now* divide
No realms of beauty with their rolling tide, (³)

Each several life yet opens with the view
Of that unblighted world where Adam drew
The breath of being : in each several mind,
However cramp'd, and fetter'd, and confined,
The innate power of beauty folded lies,
And, like a bud beneath the summer skies,
Blooms out in youth through many a radiant day,
Though in life's winter frost it dies away.

From such a vision, bright with all the fame
Her youth, her innocence, her hope, could frame,
Arose the maid : and, when her shadowy gaze
Had lost the dazzled look of wild amaze
Turn'd on her mother when she first awoke,
Thus to her questioning glance she answering spoke:—

“ Methought, oh ! gentle Mother, by thy side
I dwelt no more as now, but through a wide
And sweet world wander'd ; nor even then alone ;
For ever in that dream's soft light stood one,—
I know not who,—yet most familiar seem'd
The fond companionship of which I dream'd !

A Brother's love, is but a name to me ;
A Father's, brighten'd not my infancy ;
To me, in childhood's years, no stranger's face
Took, from long habit, friendship's holy grace ;
My life hath still been lone, and needed not,
Heaven knows, more perfect love than was my lot
In thy dear heart: how dream'd I then, sweet Mother,
Of any love but thine, who knew no other ?

“ We seem'd, this shadow and myself, to be
Together by the blue and boundless sea :
No settled home was present to my thought—
No other form my clouded fancy brought ;
This one Familiar Presence still beguiled
My every thought, and look'd on me and smiled.
Fair stretch'd in beauty lay the glittering strand,
With low green copses sloping from the land ;
And tangled underwood, and sunny fern,
And flowers whose humble names none cared to learn,
Small starry wild flowers, white and gold and blue,
With leaves turn'd crimson by th' autumnal hue,
Bask'd in the fervour of the noontide glow,
Whose hot rays pierced the thirsty roots below.

The floating nautilus rose clear and pale,
As though a spirit trimm'd its fairy sail,
White and transparent ; and beyond it gleam'd
Such light as never yet on Ocean beam'd :
And pink-lipp'd shells, and many-colour'd weeds,
And long brown bulbous things like jasper beads,
And glistening pearls in beauty faint and fair,
And all things strange, and wonderful, and rare,
Whose true existence travellers make known,
Seem'd scatter'd there, and easily my own.
And then we wove our ciphers in the sands,
All fondly intertwined by loving hands ;
And laugh'd to see the rustling snow-white spray
Creep o'er the names, and wash their trace away.
And the storm came not, though the white foam curl'd
 In lines of brightness far along the coast ;
Though many a ship, with swelling sails unfurl'd,
 From the mid-sea to sheltering haven cross'd ;
Though the wild billows heaved, and rose, and broke,
 One o'er the other with a restless sound,
And the deep spirit of the wind awoke,
 Ruffling in wrath each glassy verdant mound ;
While onward roll'd that army of huge waves,
 Until the foremost, with exulting roar,

Rose, proudly crested, o'er his brother slaves,
And dash'd triumphant on the groaning shore !
For then the Moon rose up, Night's mournful Queen,
' Walking with white feet o'er the troubled Sea,'
And all grew still again, as she had been
Heaven's messenger to bring Tranquillity ;
Till, pale and tender, on the glistening main
She sank and smiled like one who loves in vain.
And still we linger'd by that shadowy strand,
Happy, yet full of thought, hand link'd in hand ;
The hush'd waves rippling softly at our feet,
The night-breeze freshening o'er the Summer's heat ;
With our hearts beating, and our gazing eyes
Fix'd on the star-light of those deep blue skies,
Blessing ' the year, the hour, the place, the time ;' (4)
While sounded, faint and far, some turret's midnight chime.

“ It pass'd, that vision of the Ocean's might !

I know not how, for in my slumbering mind
There was no movement, all was shifting light,
Through which we floated with the wandering wind ;
And, still together, in a different scene,
We look'd on England's woodland, fresh and green.

“ No perfume of the cultured rose was there,
Wooing the senses with its garden smell,—
Nor snow-white lily,—call’d so proudly fair,
Though by the poor man’s cot she loves to dwell,
Nor finds his little garden scant of room
To bid her stately buds in beauty bloom ;—
Nor jasmin, with her pale stars shining through
The myrtle darkness of her leaf’s green hue,—
Nor heliotrope, whose grey and heavy wreath
Mimics the orchard blossoms’ fruity breath,—
Nor clustering dahlia, with its scentless flowers
Cheating the heart through autumn’s faded hours,—
Nor bright chrysanthemum, whose train’d array
Still makes the rich man’s winter path look gay,
And bows its hardy head when wild winds blow,
To free its petals from the fallen snow ;—
Nor yet carnation ;”—

(Thou, beloved of all
The plants that thrive at Art or Nature’s call,
By one who greets thee with a weary sigh
As the dear friend of happy days gone by ;
By one who names thee last, but loves thee first,
Of all the flowers a garden ever nursed ;

The mute remembrancer and gentle token
Of links which heavy hands have roughly broken,
Welcomed through many a Summer with the same
Unalter'd gladness as when first ye came,
And welcomed still, though—as in later years
We often welcome pleasant things—with tears !)

I wander ! In the Dream these had no place,—
Nor Sorrow :—all was Nature's freshest grace.

“ There, wild geranium, with its woolly stem
And aromatic breath, perfumed the glade ;
And fairy speedwell, like some sapphire gem,
Lighted with purple sparks the hedge-row's shade ;
And woodbine, with her tinted calyxes,
And dog-rose, glistening with the dews of morn,
And tangled wreaths of tufted clematis,
Whose blossoms pale the careless eye may scorn,
(As green and light her fairy mantles fall
To hide the rough hedge or the crumbling wall,)
But in whose breast the laden wild-bees dive
For the best riches of their teeming hive :

“ There, sprang the sunny cricket ; there, was spread
The fragile silver of the spider’s thread,
Stretching from blade to blade of emerald grass,
Unbroken, till some human footstep pass ;
There, by the rippling stream that murmur’d on,
Now seen, now hidden—half in light, half Sun—
The darting dragon-fly, with sudden gleam,
Shot, as it went, a gold and purple beam ;
And the fish leap’d within the deeper pool,
And the green trees stretch’d out their branches cool,
Where many a bird hush’d in her peopled nest
The unfledged darlings of her feather’d breast,
Listening her mate’s clear song, in that sweet grove
Where all around breathed happiness and love !

“ And while we talk’d the summer hours flew fast,
As hours may fly, with those whose love is young ;
Who fear no future, and who know no past,
Dating existence from the hope that sprung
Up in their hearts with such a sudden light,
That all beyond shows dark and blank as night.

“ Until methought we trod a wide flat heath,

Where yew and cypress darkly seem'd to wave
O'er countless tombs, so beautiful, that death

Seem'd here to make a garden of the grave!
All that is holy, tender, full of grace,

Was sculptured on the monuments around,
And many a line the musing eye could trace,
Which spoke unto the heart without a sound.

There lay the warrior and the son of song,

And there—in silence till the judgment-day—
The orator, whose all-persuading tongue

Had moved the nations with resistless sway:
There slept pale men whom science taught to climb

Restlessly upward all their labouring youth;
Who left, half conquer'd, secrets which in time
Burst on mankind in ripe and glorious truth.

He that had gazed upon the steadfast stars,

And could foretel the dark eclipse's birth,
And when red comets in their blazing cars

Should sweep above the awed and troubled earth:—
He that had sped brave vessels o'er the seas,

Which swiftly bring the wanderer to his home,
Uncanvass'd ships, which move without a breeze,

Their bright wheels dashing through the ocean foam:—

All, who in this life's bounded brief career
Had shone amongst, or served their fellow-men,
And left a name embalm'd in glory here,
Lay calmly buried on that magic plain.
And he who wander'd with me in my dream,
Told me their histories as we onward went,
Till the grave shone with such a hallow'd beam,
Such pleasure with their memory seem'd blent,
That, when we look'd to heaven, our upward eyes
With no funereal sadness mock'd the skies!

“ Then, change of scene, and time, and place once more ;
And by a Gothic window, richly bright,
Whose stain'd armorial bearings on the floor
Flung the quaint tracery of their colour'd light,
We sate together: his most noble head
Bent o'er the storied tome of other days,
And still he commented on all we read,
And taught me what to love, and what to praise.
Then Spenser made the summer-day seem brief,
Or Milton sounded with a loftier song,
Then Cowper charm'd, with lays of gentle grief,
Or glorious Dryden roll'd the hour along.

Or, in his varied beauty dearer still,
Sweet Shakspeare changed the world around at will ;
And we forgot the sunshine of that room
To sit with Jacquez in the forest gloom ;
To look abroad with Juliet's anxious eye
For her boy-lover 'neath the moonlight sky ;
Stand with Macbeth upon the haunted heath,
Or weep for gentle Desdemona's death ;
Watch, on bright Cydnus' wave, the glittering sheen
And silken sails of Egypt's wanton Queen ;
Or roam with Ariel through that island strange
Where spirits, and not men, were wont to range,
Still struggling on through brake, and bush, and hollow,
Hearing that sweet voice calling—' Follow ! follow !'

“ Nor were there wanting lays of other lands,
For these were all familiar in his hands :
And Dante's dream of horror work'd its spell,—
And Petrarch's sadness on our bosoms fell,—
And prison'd Tasso's—he, the coldly-loved,
The madly-loving ! he, so deeply proved
By many a year of darkness, like the grave,
For her who dared not plead, or would not save, (5)

For her who thought the poet's suit brought shame,
Whose passion hath immortalized her name!
And Egmont, with his noble heart betray'd,—
And Carlos, haunted by a murder'd shade,—
And Faust's strange legend, sweet and wondrous wild,
Stole many a tear:—Creation's loveliest child!
Guileless, ensnared, and tempted Margaret,
Who could peruse thy fate with eyes unwet?

“ Then, through the lands we read of, far away,
The vision led me all a summer's day:
And we look'd round on southern Italy,
Where her dark head the graceful cypress rears
In arrowy straightness and soft majesty,
And the sun's face a mellower glory wears;
Bringing, where'er his warm light richly shines,
Sweet odours from the gum-distilling pines;
And casting o'er white palaces a glow,
Like morning's hue on mountain-peaks of snow.

“ Those palaces! how fair their columns rose!
Their courts, cool fountains, and wide porticos!
And ballustraded roofs, whose very form
Told what an unknown stranger was the storm!

In one of these we dwelt : its painted walls
A master's hand had been employ'd to trace ;
Its long cool range of shadowy marble halls
Was fill'd with statues of most living grace ;
While on its ceilings roll'd the fiery car
Of the bright day-god, chasing night afar,—
Or Jove's young favourite, toward Olympus' height
Soar'd with the Eagle's dark majestic flight,—
Or fair Apollo's harp seem'd freshly strung,
All heaven group'd round him, listening while he sung.

“ So, in the garden's plann'd and planted bound
All wore the aspect of enchanted ground ;
Thick orange-groves, close arching over head,
Shelter'd the paths our footsteps loved to tread ;
Or ilex-trees shut out, with shadow sweet,
Th' oppressive splendour of the noontide heat.
Through the bright vista, at each varying turn,
Gleam'd the white statue, or the graceful urn ;
And, paved with many a curved and twisted line
Of fair Mosaic's strange and quaint design,
Terrace on terrace rose, with steep so slight,
That scarce the pausing eye inquired the height,

Till stretch'd beneath in far perspective lay
The glittering city and the deep blue bay!
Then as we turn'd again to groves and bowers,
(Rich with the perfume of a thousand flowers,)
The sultry day was cheated of its force
By the sweet winding of some streamlet's course:
From sculptured arch, and ornamented walls,
Rippled a thousand tiny waterfalls,
While here and there an open basin gave
Rest to the eye and freshness to the wave;
Here, high above the imprison'd waters, stood
Some imaged Naiad, guardian of the flood;
There, in a cool and grotto-like repose,
The sea-born goddess from her shell arose;
Or river-god his fertile urn display'd,
Gushing at distance through the lone arcade,—
Or Triton, lifting his wild conch on high,
Spouted the silver tribute to the sky,—
Or, lovelier still, (because to Nature true,
Even in the thought creative genius drew,)
Some statue-nymph, her bath of beauty o'er
Stood gently bending by the rocky shore,
And, like Bologna's sweet and graceful dream,
From her moist hair wrung out the living stream. (6)

“ Bright was the spot! and still we linger’d on
Unwearied, till the summer-day was done ;
Till He, who, when the morning dew was wet,
In glory rose—in equal glory set.
Fair sank his light, unclouded to the last,
And o’er that land its glow of beauty cast ;
And the sweet breath of evening air went forth
To cool the bosom of the fainting earth ;
To bid the pale-leaved olives lightly wave
Upon their seaward slope (whose waters lave
With listless gentleness the golden strand,
And scarcely leave, and scarce return to land);
Or with its wings of freshness, wandering round,
Visit the heights with many a villa crown’d,
Where the still pine and cypress, side by side,
Look from their distant hills on Ocean’s tide.

“ The cypress and the pine ! Ah, still I see
These thy green children, lovely Italy !
Nature’s dear favourites, allow’d to wear
Their summer hue throughout the circling year !
And oft, when wandering out at even-time
To watch the sunsets of a colder clime,

As the dim landscape fades and grows more faint,
Fancy's sweet power a different scene shall paint;
Enrich with deeper tints the colours given
To the pale beauty of our English heaven,—
Bid purple mountains rise among the clouds,
Or deem their mass some marble palace shrouds,—
Trace on the red horizon's level line,
In outlines dark, the high majestic pine,—
And hear, amid the groups of English trees,
His sister cypress murmuring to the breeze!

“ Never again shall evening, sweet and still,
Gleam upon river, mountain, rock, or hill,—
Never again shall fresh and budding spring,
Or brighter summer, hue of beauty bring,
In this, the clime where 'tis my lot to dwell,
But shall recall, as by a magic spell,
Thy scenes, dear land of poetry and song!
Bid thy fair statues on my memory throng;
Thy glorious pictures gleam upon my sight
Like fleeting shadows o'er the summer light;
And send my haunted heart to dwell once more,
Glad and entranced by thy delightful shore—

Thy shore, where rolls that blue and tideless sea,
Bright as thyself, thou radiant Italy !

“ And there (where Beauty’s spirit sure had birth,
Though she hath wander’d since upon the earth,
And scatter’d, as she pass’d, some sparks of thought,
Such as of old her sons of genius wrought,
To show what strength the immortal soul can wield
E’en here, in this its dark and narrow field,
And fill us with a fond inquiring thirst
To see that land which claim’d her triumphs first)
Music was brought—with soft impressive power—
To fill with varying joy the varying hour.
We welcomed it ; for welcome still to all
It comes, in cottage, court, or lordly hall ;
And in the long bright summer evenings, oft
We sate and listened to some measure soft
From many instruments ; or, faint and lone,
(Touch’d by his gentle hand, or by my own,)
The little lute its chorded notes would send
Tender and clear ; and with our voices blend
Cadence so true, that, when the breeze swept by,
One mingled echo floated on its sigh !

And still as day by day we saw depart,
I was the living idol of his heart :
How to make joy a portion of the air
That breathed around me, seem'd his only care.
For me the harp was strung, the page was turn'd ;
For me the morning rose, the sunset burn'd ;
For me the Spring put on her verdant suit ;
For me the Summer flower, the Autumn fruit ;
The very world seem'd mine, so mighty strove
For my contentment, that enduring love.

“ I see him still, dear mother ! Still I hear
That voice so deeply soft, so strangely clear ;
Still in the air wild wandering echoes float,
And bring my dream's sweet music note for note !
Oh ! shall those sounds no more my fancy bless,
Which fill my heart, and on my memory press ?
Shall I no more those sunset clouds behold,
Floating like bright transparent thrones of gold ?
The skies, the seas, the hills of glorious blue ;
The glades and groves, with glories shining through ;
The bands of red and purple, richly seen
Athwart the sky of pale, faint, gem-like green ;

When the breeze slept, the earth lay hush'd and still,
 When the low sun sank slanting from the hill,
 And slow and amber-tinged the moon uprose,
 To watch his farewell hour in glory close?
 Is all that radiance past—gone by for ever—
 And must there in its stead for ever be
 The grey, sad sky, the cold and clouded river,
 And dismal dwellings by the wintry sea?
 E'er half a summer, altering day by day,
 In fickle brightness, here, hath pass'd away!
 And was that form (whose love might still sustain)
 Nought but a vapour of the dreaming brain?—
 Would I had slept for ever!"

Sad she sigh'd;

To whom the mournful mother thus replied:—

“Upbraid not Heaven, whose wisdom thus would rule
 A world whose changes are the soul's best school:
 All dream like thee, and 'tis for Mercy's sake
 That those who dream the wildest, soonest wake;
 All deem Perfection's system would be found
 In giving earthly sense no stint or bound;
 All look for happiness beneath the sun,
 And each expects what God hath given to *none*.

“ In what an idle luxury of joy
Would thy spoil'd heart its useless hours employ !
In what a selfish loneliness of light
Wouldst thou exist, read we thy dream aright !
How hath thy sleeping spirit broke the chain
Which knits thy human lot to other's pain,
And made this world of peopled millions seem
For thee and for the lover of thy dream !

“ Think not my heart with cold indifference heard
The various feelings which in thine have stirr'd,
Or that its sad and weary currents know
Faint sympathy, except for human woe :
Well have the dormant echoes of my breast
Answer'd the joys thy gentle voice express'd ;
Conjured a vision of the stately mate
With whom the flattering vision link'd thy fate ;
And follow'd thee through grove and woodland wild,
Where so much natural beauty round thee smiled.

“ What man so worldly-wise, or chill'd by age,
Who, bending o'er the faint descriptive page,

Recals not such a scene in some far nook—
 (Whereon his eyes, perchance, no more shall look ;)
 Some hawthorn copse, some gnarl'd majestic tree,
 The favourite play-place of his infancy ?
 Who has not felt for Cowper's sweet lament, (')
 When twelve years' course their cruel change had sent ;
 When his fell'd poplars gave no further shade,
 And low on earth the blackbird's nest was laid ;
 When in a desert sunshine, bare and blank,
 Lay the green field and river's mossy bank ;
 And melody of bird or branch no more
 Rose with the breeze that swept along the shore ?

“ Few are the hearts, (nor theirs of kindly frame,)
 On whom fair Nature holds not such a claim ;
 And oft, in after-life, some simple thing—
 A bank of primroses in early Spring—
 The tender scent which hidden violets yield—
 The sight of cowslips in a meadow-field—
 Or young laburnum's pendant yellow chain—
 May bring the favourite play-ground back again !
 Our youthful mates are gone ; some dead, some changed,
 With whom that pleasant spot was gladly ranged ;

Ourselves, perhaps, more alter'd e'en than they—
But *there* still blooms the blossom-showering May ;
There still along the hedge-row's verdant line
The linnet sings, the thorny brambles twine ;
Still in the copse a troop of merry elves
Shout—the gay image of our former selves ;
And still, with sparkling eyes and eager hands,
Some rosy urchin high on tiptoe stands,
And plucks the ripest berries from the bough—
Which tempts a different generation now !

“ What though no *real* beauty haunt that spot,
By graver minds beheld and noticed not ?
Can we forget that once to our young eyes
It wore the aspect of a Paradise ?
No ; still around its hallow'd precinct lives
The fond mysterious charm that memory gives ;
The man recalls the feelings of the boy,
And clothes the meanest flower with freshness and with joy.

“ Nor think by elder hearts forgotten quite
Love's whisper'd words ; youth's sweet and strange delight !

They live—though after-memories fade away ;
They live—to cheer life's slow declining day ;
Haunting the widow by her lonely hearth,
As, meekly smiling at her children's mirth,
She spreads her fair thin hands towards the fire,
To seek the warmth their slacken'd veins require :
Or gladdening her to whom Heaven's mercy spares
Her old companion with his silver hairs ;
And while he dozes—changed, and dull, and weak—
And his hush'd grandchild signs, but dares not speak,—
Bidding her watch, with many a tender smile,
The wither'd form which slumbers all the while.

“ Yes! sweet the voice of those we loved! the tone
Which cheers our memory as we sit alone,
And will not leave us; the o'er-mastering force,
Whose under-current's strange and hidden course
Bids some chance word, by colder hearts forgot,
Return—and still return—yet weary not
The ear which woos its sameness! How, when Death
Hath stopp'd with ruthless hand some precious breath,
The memory of the *voice* he hath destroy'd
Lives in our souls, as in an aching void!

How, through the varying fate of after-years,
When stifled sorrow weeps but casual tears,
If some stray tone seem *like* the voice we knew,
The heart leaps up with answer deep and true!
Greeting again that sweet, long-vanish'd sound,
As, in earth's nooks of ever-haunted ground,
Strange accident, or man's capricious will,
Wakes the lone echoes, and they answer still!

“ Oh! what a shallow fable cheats the age,
When the lost lover, on the motley stage,
Wrapp'd from his mistress in some quaint disguise,
Deceives her ear, because he cheats her eyes!
Rather, if all could fade which charm'd us first,—
If, by some magic stroke, some plague-spot cursed,
All outward semblance left the form beloved
A wreck unrecognised, and half disproved,
At the dear sound of that familiar voice
Her waken'd heart should tremble and rejoice,
Leap to its faith at once,—and spurn the doubt
Which, on such showing, barr'd his welcome out!

“ And if even *words* are sweet, what, what is song,
When lips we love, the melody prolong?
How thrills the soul, and vibrates to that lay,
Swells with the glorious sound, or dies away!
How, to the cadence of the simplest words
That ever hung upon the wild harp’s chords,
The breathless heart lies listening; as it felt
All life within it on that music dwelt,
And hush’d the beating pulse’s rapid power
By its own will, for that enchanted hour!

“ Ay! *then* to those who love the science well,
Music becomes a passion and a spell!
Music, the tender child of rudest times,
The gentle native of all lands and climes;
Who hymns alike man’s cradle and his grave,
Lulls the low cot, or peals along the nave;
Cheers the poor peasant, who his native hills
With wild Tyrolean echoes sweetly fills;
Inspires the Indian’s low monotonous chant,
Weaves skilful melodies for Luxury’s haunt;
And still, through all these changes, lives the same,
Spirit without a home, without a name,

Coming, where all is discord, strife, and sin,
To prove some innate harmony within
Our listening souls ; and lull the heaving breast
With the dim vision of an unknown rest !

“ But, dearest child, though many a joy be given
By the pure bounty of all-pitying Heaven,—
Though sweet emotions in our hearts have birth,
As flowers are spangled on the lap of earth,—
Though, with the flag of Hope and Triumph hung
High o’er our heads, we start when life is young,
And onward cheer’d, by sense, and sight, and sound,
Like a launch’d bark, we enter with a bound ;
Yet must the dark cloud lour, the tempest fall,
And the same chance of shipwreck waits for all.
Happy are they who leave the harbouring land
Not for a summer voyage, hand in hand,
Pleasure’s light slaves ; but with an earnest eye
Exploring all the future of their sky ;
That so, when Life’s career at length is past,
To the right haven they may steer at last,
And safe from hidden rock, or open gale,
Lay by the oar, and furl the slacken’d sail,—

To anchor deeply on that tranquil shore
Where vexing storms can never reach them more!

“ Wouldst thou be singled out by partial Heaven
The ONE to whom a cloudless lot is given?
Look round the world, and see what fate is there,
Which justice can pronounce exempt from care:
Though bright they bloom to empty outward show,
There lurks in each some canker-worm of woe;
Still by some thorn the onward step is cross'd,
Nor least repining those who 're envied most:
The poor have struggling, toil, and wounded pride,
Which seeks, and seeks in vain, its rags to hide;
The rich, cold jealousies, intrigues, and strife,
And heart-sick discontent which poisons life;
The loved are parted by the hand of Death,
The hated live to curse each other's breath:
The wealthy noble mourns the want of heirs;
While, each the object of incessant prayers,
Gay, hardy sons, around the widow's board,
With careless smiles devour her scanty hoard;
And hear no sorrow in her stifled sigh,
And see no terror in her anxious eye,—

While *she* in fancy antedates the time
When, scatter'd far and wide in many a clime,
These heirs to nothing but their Father's name
Must earn their bread, and struggle hard for fame ;
To sultry India sends her fair-hair'd boy—
Sees the dull desk another's youth employ—
And parts with one to sail the uncertain main,
Never perhaps on earth to meet again !

“ Nor ev'n does Love, whose fresh and radiant beam
Gave added brightness to thy wandering dream,
Preserve from bitter touch of ills unknown,
But rather brings strange sorrows of its own.
Various the ways in which our souls are tried ;
Love often fails where most our faith relied ;
Some wayward heart may win, without a thought,
That which thine own by sacrifice had bought ;
May carelessly aside the treasure cast,
And yet be madly worshipp'd to the last ;
Whilst thou, forsaken, grieving, left to pine,
Vainly may'st claim his plighted faith as thine ;
Vainly his idol's charms with thine compare,
And know thyself as young, as bright, as fair ;

Vainly in jealous pangs consume thy day,
And waste the sleepless night in tears away ;
Vainly with forced indulgence strive to smile
In the cold world, heart-broken all the while,
Or from its glittering and unquiet crowd,
Thy brain on fire, thy spirit crush'd and bow'd,
Creep home unnoticed, there to weep alone,
Mock'd by a claim which gives thee not thine own,
Which leaves thee bound through all thy blighted youth
To him whose perjured soul hath broke its truth ;
While the just world, beholding thee bereft,
Scorns—not his sin—but *thee*, for being left !

“ Ah ! never to the Sensualist appeal,
Nor deem his frozen bosom aught can feel.
Affection, root of all fond memories,
Which bids what once hath charm'd for ever please,
He knows not : all thy beauty could inspire
Was but a sentiment of low desire :
If from thy cheek the rose's hue be gone,
How should love stay which loved for that alone ?
Or, if thy youthful face be still as bright
As when it first entranced his eager sight,

Thou art *the same* ; there is thy fault, thy crime,
Which fades the charms yet spared by rapid Time.
Talk to him of the happy days gone by,
Conceal'd aversion chills his shrinking eye :
While in thine agony thou still dost rave,
Impatient wishes doom thee to the grave ;
And if his cold and selfish thought had power
T' accelerate the fatal final hour,
The silent murder were already done,
And thy white tomb would glitter in the sun.
What wouldst thou hold by ? What is it to him
That for his sake thy weeping eyes are dim ?
His pall'd and wearied senses rove apart,
And for his heart—thou never *hadst* his heart.

“ True, there is better love, whose balance just
Mingles Soul's instinct with our grosser dust,
And leaves affection, strengthening day by day,
Firm to assault, impervious to decay.
To such, a star of hope thy love shall be
Whose stedfast light he still desires to see ;
And age shall vainly mar thy beauty's grace,
Or wantons plot to steal into thy place,

Or wild Temptation, from her hidden bowers,
Fling o'er his path her bright but poisonous flowers,—
Dearer to him than all who thus beguile,
Thy faded face, and thy familiar smile ;
Thy glance, which still hath welcomed him for years,
Now bright with gladness, and now dim with tears !
And if (for we are weak) division come
On wings of discord to that happy home,
Soon is the painful hour of anger past,
Too sharp, too strange an agony to last ;
And, like some river's bright abundant tide
Which art or accident hath forced aside,
The well-springs of affection, gushing o'er,
Back to their natural channels flow once more.

“ Ah! sad it is when one thus link'd departs !
When Death, that mighty severer of true hearts,
Sweeps through the halls so lately loud in mirth,
And leaves pale Sorrow weeping by the hearth !
Bitter it is to wander there alone,
To fill the vacant place, the empty chair,
With a dear vision of the loved one gone,
And start to see it vaguely melt in air !

Bitter to find all joy that once hath been
Double its value when 'tis pass'd away,—
To feel the blow which Time should make less keen
Increase its burden each successive day,—
To need good counsel, and to miss the voice,
The ever trusted, and the ever true,
Whose tones were wont to cheer our faltering choice,
And show what holy Virtue bade us do,—
To bear deep wrong, and bow the widow'd head
In helpless anguish, no one to defend ;
Or worse,—in lieu of him, the kindly dead,
Claim faint assistance from some lukewarm friend,—
Yet scarce perceive the extent of all our loss
Till the fresh tomb be green with gathering moss—
Till many a morn have met our sadden'd eyes
With none to say “ Good morrow ; ”—many an eve
Sent its red glory through the tranquil skies,
Each bringing with it deeper cause to grieve !

“ This is a destiny which may be thine—
The common grief: God will'd it should be mine :
Short was the course our happy love had run,
And hard it was to say ‘ Thy will be done !’

“ Yet those whom man, not God, hath parted, know
A heavier pang, a more enduring woe ;
No softening memory mingles with *their* tears,
Still the wound rankles on through dreary years,
Still the heart feels, in bitterest hours of blame,
It dares not curse the long-familiar name ;
Still, vainly free, through many a cheerless day,
From weaker ties turns helplessly away,
Sick for the smiles that bless'd its home of yore,
The natural joys of life that come no more ;
And, all bewilder'd by the abyss, whose gloom
Dark and impassable as is the tomb,
Lies stretch'd between the future and the past,—
Sinks into deep and cold despair at last.

“ Heaven give thee poverty, disease, or death,
Each varied ill that waits on human breath,
Rather than bid thee linger out thy life
In the long toil of such unnatural strife.
To wander through the world unreconciled,
Heart weary as a spirit-broken child,
And think it were an hour of bliss like heaven
If thou could'st *die*—forgiving and forgiven,—

Or with a feverish hope, of anguish born,
(Nerving thy mind to feel indignant scorn
Of all the cruel foes who 'twixt ye stand,
Holding thy heartstrings with a reckless hand,)
Steal to his presence, now unseen so long,
And claim *his* mercy who hath dealt the wrong!
Into the aching depths of thy poor heart
 Dive, as it were, even to the roots of pain,
And wrench up thoughts that tear thy soul apart,
 And burn like fire through thy bewilder'd brain.
Clothe them in passionate words of wild appeal
To teach thy fellow-creature *how* to feel,—
Pray, weep, exhaust thyself in maddening tears,—
Recal the hopes, the influence of years,—
Kneel, dash thyself upon the senseless ground,
Writhe as the worm writhes with dividing wound,—
Invoke the heaven that knows thy sorrow's truth,
By all the softening memories of youth—
By every hope that cheer'd thine earlier day—
By every tear that washes wrath away—
By every dear remembrance long gone by—
By every pang that makes thee yearn to die ;
And learn at length how deep and stern a blow
Near hands can strike, and yet no pity show !

“ Oh! weak to suffer, savage to inflict,
Is man’s commingling nature ; hear him now
Some transient trial of his life depict,
Hear him in holy rites a suppliant bow ;
See him shrink back from sickness and from pain,
And in his sorrow to his God complain ;
‘ Remit my trespass, spare my sin,’ he cries,
‘ All-merciful, Almighty, and All-wise ;
Stem this affliction’s bitter whelming tide,
Draw out thy barbed arrow from my side :’—
—And rises from that mockery of prayer
To hale some brother-debtor to despair!

“ May this be spared thee! Yet be sure, my child,
(Howe’er that dream thy fancy hath beguiled,)
Some sorrow lurks to cloud thy future fate ;
Thy share of tears,—come early or come late,—
Must still be shed ; and ’twere as vain a thing
To ask of Nature one perpetual spring
As to evade those sad autumnal hours,
Or deem thy path of life should bloom, all flowers.”

She ceased : and that fair maiden heard the truth
With the fond passionate despair of youth,
Which, new to suffering, gives its sorrow vent
In outward signs and bursts of wild lament :—

“ If this be so, then, mother, let me die
Ere yet the glow hath faded from my sky !
Let me die young ; before the holy trust
In human kindness crumbles into dust ;
Before I suffer what I have not earn'd,
Or see by treachery my truth return'd ;
Before the love I live for, fades away ;
Before the hopes I cherish'd most, decay ;
Before the withering touch of fearful change
Makes some familiar face look cold and strange,
Or some dear heart close knitted to my own,
By perishing, hath left me more alone !
Though death be bitter, I can brave its pain
Better than all which threatens if I remain :
While my soul, freed from ev'ry chance of ill,
Soars to that God whose high mysterious will
Sent me, foredoom'd to grief, with wandering feet,
To grope my way through all this fair deceit !”

Her parent heard the words with grieved amaze,
And thus return'd, with calm reproving gaze :—

“ Blaspheme not Heaven with rash impatient speech,
Nor deem, at thine own hour, its rest to reach,
Unhappy child! The full appointed time
Is His to choose; and when the sullen chime,
And deep-toned striking of the funeral bell,
Thy fate to earthly ears shall sadly tell,
Oh! may the death thou talk'st of as a boon,
Find thee prepared,—nor come even then too soon!

“ True, ere thou meet'st that long and dreamless sleep,
Thy heart must ache—thy weary eyes must weep:
It is our human lot! The fairest child
That e'er on loving mother brightly smiled,—
Most watch'd, most tended—ere his eyelids close
Hath had his little share of infant woes,
And dies familiar with the sense of grief,
Though for all else his life hath been too brief!
But shall we therefore, murmuring against God,
Question the justice of his chastening rod,
And look to earthly joys as though *they* were
The prize immortal souls were given to share?

“ Oh! were such joys and this vain world alone
The term of human hope—where, where would be
The victims of some tyranny unknown,
Who sank, still conscious that the *mind* was free?
They that have lain in dungeons years on years,
No voice to cheer their darkness,—they whose pain
Of horrid torture wrung forth blood with tears,
Murder’d, perhaps, for some rapacious gain,—
They who have stood, bound to the martyr’s stake,
While the sharp flames ate through the blistering skin,—
They that have bled for some high cause’s sake,—
They that have perish’d for another’s sin,
And from the scaffold to that God appeal’d
To whom the naked heart is all reveal’d,
Against the shortening of life’s narrow span
By the blind rage and false decree of man?
And where obscurer sufferers—they who slept
And left no name on history’s random page,—
But in God’s book of reckoning, sternly kept,
Live on from year to year, from age to age?
The poor—the labouring poor! whose weary lives,
Through many a freezing night and hungry day,
Are a reproach to him who only strives
In luxury to waste his hours away,—

The patient poor! whose insufficient means
Make sickness dreadful, yet by whose low bed
Oft in meek prayer some fellow-sufferer leans,
And trusts in Heaven while destitute of bread;
The workhouse orphan, left without a friend;
Or weak forsaken child of want and sin,
Whose helpless life begins, as it must end,
By men disputing who shall take it in;
Who clothe, who aid that spark to linger here,
Which for mysterious purpose God hath given
To struggle through a day of toil and fear,
And meet him—with the proudest—up in heaven!
These were, and are not :—shall we therefore deem
That they have vanish'd like a sleeper's dream?
Or that one half creation is to know
Luxurious joy, and others only woe,
And so go down into the common tomb,
With none to question their unequal doom?
Shall we give credit to a thought so fond?
Ah! no—the world beyond—the world beyond!
There, shall the desolate heart regain its own!
There, the oppress'd shall stand before God's throne!
There, when the tangled web is all explain'd,
Wrong suffer'd, pain inflicted, grief disdain'd,

Man's proud mistaken judgments and false scorn
Shall melt like mists before uprising morn,
And holy truth stand forth serenely bright,
In the rich flood of God's eternal light!

“ Then shall the Lazarus of the earth have rest—
The rich man judgment—and the grieving breast
Deep peace for ever. Therefore look thou not
So much to what on earth shall be thy lot,
As to thy fate hereafter,—to that day
When like a scroll this world shall pass away,
And what thou here hast done, or here enjoy'd,
Import but to thy *soul*:—all else destroy'd!

“ And have thou aith in human nature still;
Though evil thoughts abound, and acts of ill;
Though innocence in sorrow shrouded be,
And tyranny's strong step walk bold and free!
For many a kindly generous deed is done
Which leaves no record underneath the sun—
Self-abnegating love and humble worth,
Which yet shall consecrate our sinful earth!
He that deals blame, and yet forgets to praise,
Who sets brief storms against long summer-days,

Hath a sick judgment. Shall the usual joy
Be all forgot, and nought our minds employ,
Through the long course of ever-varying years,
But temporary pain and casual tears?
And shall we *all* condemn, and *all* distrust,
Because some men are false and some unjust?
Forbid it Heaven! far better 'twere to be
Dupe of the fond impossibility
Of light and radiance which thy vision gave
Than thus to live Suspicion's bitter slave.
Give credit to thy mortal brother's heart
For all the good that in thine own hath part,
And, cheerfully as honest prudence may,
Trust to his proffer'd hand's protecting stay:
For God, who made this teeming earth so full,
And made the proud dependant on the dull—
The strong upon the weak—thereby would show
One common bond should link us all below.

“ And visit not with a severer scorn
Faults, whose deep root was with our nature born,
From which—though others woo'd thee just as vain—
Thou, differently tempted, didst abstain:

Nor dwell on points of creed—assuming right
To judge how holy in his Maker's sight
Is he who at a different altar bends ;
For hence have ris'n the bitterest feuds of friends,
The wildest wars of nations ; age on age
Hath desecrated thus dark History's page ;
And still (though not, perhaps, with fire and sword)
Reckless we raise ' The banner of the Lord !'
Mock Heaven's calm mercy by the plea we make,
That all is done for gentle Jesus' sake,—
Disturb the consciences of weaker men,—
Employ the scholar's art, the bigot's pen,—
And rouse the wrathful and the spirit-proud
To language bitter, vehement, and loud,
Whose unconvincing fury wounds the ear,
And seeking, with some sharp and haughty sneer,
How best the opposing party may be stung,—
Pleads for Religion with a demon's tongue !

“ Oh ! shall God tolerate the meanest prayer
That humbly seeks his high supernal throne,
And man—presumptuous Pharisee—declare
His fellow's voice less welcome than his own ?

Is it a theme for wild and warring words
How best to satisfy the Maker's claim?
In rendering to the Lord what is the Lord's,
Doth not the thought of violence bring shame?
Think ye he gave the branching forest-tree
To furnish fagots for the funeral pyre?
Or bid his sunrise light the world, to see
Pale tortured victims perish there by fire?
No! oft on earth, dragg'd forth in pain to die,
The heretic may groan—the martyr bleed—
But, set before his Sovereign Judge on high,
'Tis man's *offence* condemns him, not his creed.
His first commandment was to worship Him;
His next—to love the creature He hath made:
How blind the eyes of those who read, how dim,
Who see not here religious fury stay'd!
From the proud *half-fulfilment* of his law
Sternly he turns away his awful face,
Nor will contentment from their service draw,
Who fail to grant a fellow-creature grace.
Haply the days of martyrdom are past,
But still we see, without a visible end,
The bitter warfare of opinion last,
Tho' God hath will'd that man should be man's friend.

Therefore do thou, e'er yet thy youthful heart
Be tinged with their revilings, safe retreat,
And in those fierce discussions bear no part,—
Odious in all—in woman most unmeet,—
But in the still dark night, and rising day,
Humbly collect thy thoughts, and humbly pray.

“ And be not thou cast down, because thy lot
The glory of thy dream resembleth not.
Not for herself was woman first create,
Nor yet to be man's idol, but his mate.
Still from his birth his cradled bed she tends,
The first, the last, the faithfullest of friends ;
Still finds her place in sickness or in woe,
Humble to comfort, strong to undergo ;
Still in the depth of weeping sorrow tries
To watch his death-bed with her patient eyes !
And doubt not thou,—(although at times deceived,
Outraged, insulted, slander'd, crush'd, and grieved ;
Too often made a victim or a toy,
With years of sorrow for an hour of joy ;
Too oft forgot midst Pleasure's circling wiles,
Or only valued for her rosy smiles,—)

That, in the frank and generous heart of man,
The place she holds accords with Heaven's high plan ;
Still, if from wandering sin reclaim'd at all,
He sees in *her* the angel of recal ;
Still, in the sad and serious hours of life,
Turns to the sister, mother, friend, or wife ;
Views with a heart of fond and trustful pride
His faithful partner by his calm fireside ;
And oft, when barr'd of Fortune's fickle grace,
Blank ruin stares him darkly in the face,
Leans his faint head upon her kindly breast,
And owns her power to soothe him into rest,—
Owns what the gift of woman's love is worth
To cheer his toils and trials upon earth !

“ Sure it is much, this delegated power
To be consoler of man's heaviest hour !
The guardian angel of a life of care,
Allow'd to stand 'twixt him and his despair !
Such service may be made a holy task ;
And more, 'twere vain to hope, and rash to ask.
Therefore, oh ! loved and lovely, be content,
And take thy lot, with joy and sorrow blent.

Judge none ; yet let thy share of conduct be,
As knowing judgment shall be pass'd on thee
Here and hereafter ; so, still undismay'd,
And guarded by thy sweet thoughts' tranquil shade,
Undazzled by the changeful rays which threw
Their light across thy path while life was new,
Thou shalt move sober on,—expecting less,
Therefore the more enjoying, happiness.”

There was a pause ; then, with a tearful smile,
The maiden turn'd and press'd her mother's hand :—
“ Shall I not bear what thou hast borne e'erwhile ?
Shall I, rebellious, Heaven's high will withstand ?
No! cheerly on, my wandering path I'll take,
Nor fear the destiny I did not make :
Though earthly joy grow dim—though pleasure waneth—
This thou hast taught thy child, that God remaineth ! ”

And from her mother's fond protecting side
She went into the world, a youthful bride.

NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Page 6.

“ And God’s voice bless the cool hour of the day.”

“ AND they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.”—*Genesis* iii. 8.

NOTE 2.—Page 25.

“ The young saw visions, and the old dream’d dreams.”

“ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”—*Acts* ii.

NOTE 3.—Page 26.

*“ Tho’ the four glittering rivers now divide
No realms of beauty with their rolling tide.”*

It should seem that Paradise lay on the confluent stream of the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, but principally on the eastern bank;

which divided into two branches above the garden, and two more below it. From the description of these rivers by the ancient historians and geographers, Major Rennel collects that in ancient times they kept distinct courses to the sea, until the time of Alexander; though at no great distance of time afterwards they became united, and joined the sea in a collective stream.

NOTE 4.—Page 30.

“ *Blessing ‘the year, the hour, the place, the time.’*”

See Petrarch’s celebrated sonnet; that beautiful burst of passion and tenderness (which might well stagger the incredulity of those who doubt the real existence of his Laura and his love) beginning—

“ Benedetto sia ’l giorno, e’l mese, e l’ anno
E la stagione, e’l tempo, e l’ ora, e ’l punto
E ’l bel paese, e’l loco ov’ io fui giunto
Da duo begli occhi che legato m’ hanno;”

and called in the Italian edition “ *Effusione di piena allegrezza dello essersi di tale donna innamorato cotanto.*”

NOTE 5.—Page 36.

“ *For her who dared not plead, or would not save.*”

Leonora D’Este. So various are the causes assigned for Tasso’s imprisonment by his numerous biographers, that it is difficult to decide whether his capricious and tyrannical patron really believed in his imputed insanity, or was led to the gross injustice of confining him as a madman by a desire to divide his sister, at all hazards, from a suitor so humble, and yet so dangerous. Among Charnes, Serapi,

Zuccala, and others, some assume the fact of the poet's madness, and ascribe it to religious doubts which seized on his mind at a time of great irritation and annoyance from various causes; but it is certain that Tasso himself connected his cruel detention with his love for the princess; that he addressed both her and her sister in an ode couched in the most moving and melancholy terms, and appealing to her pity; and that, in a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, describing his misery while in confinement, he expresses a bitter confidence that, could the princess behold with her own eyes the wretchedness to which he was reduced, she would "have compassion on him."

NOTE 6.—Page 39.

"From her moist hair wrung out the living stream."

The beautiful statue, in bronze, by John of Bologna, intended to serve as a fountain, and representing a nymph wringing the water from her hair. This exquisite design has been lately copied from the original at Florence for Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, and will shortly be transported to England.

NOTE 7.—Page 46.

"Who has not felt for Cowper's sweet lament?"

I shall perhaps be forgiven for transcribing entire one of the most perfect of Cowper's minor poems, though doubtless familiar to very many of my readers.

"THE POPLAR FIELD.

"The poplars are fell'd : farewell to the shade,
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade ;
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

“ Twelve years have elapsed, since I last took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew ;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade.

“ The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

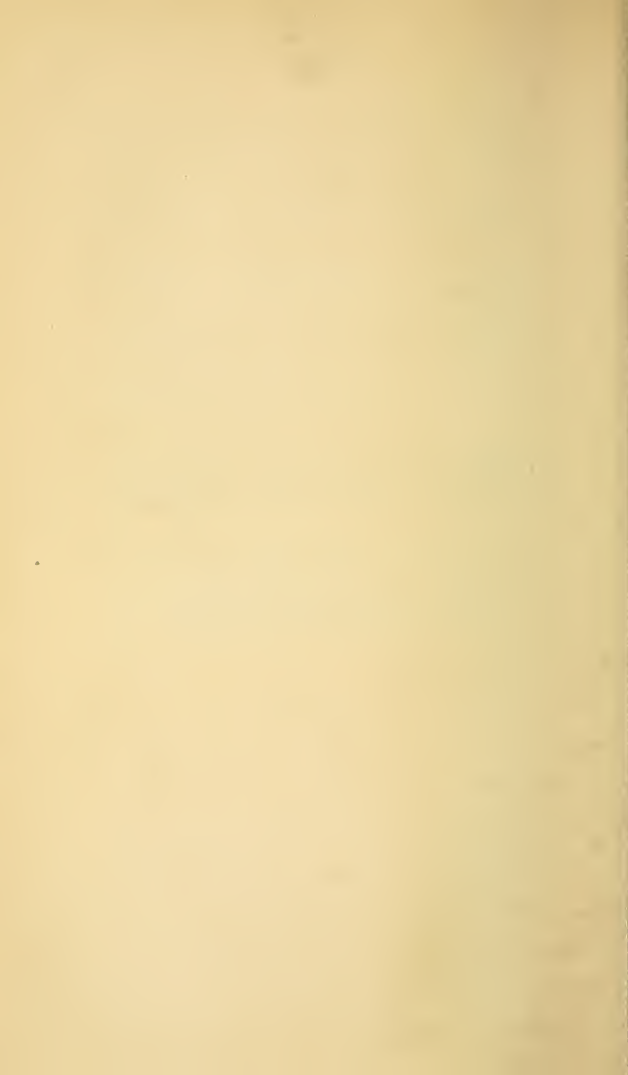
“ My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

“ 'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man ;
Tho' his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.”

THE CREOLE GIRL;

OR,

THE PHYSICIAN'S STORY.



THE CREOLE GIRL;

OR,

THE PHYSICIAN'S STORY.

Elle était de ce monde, où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin ;
Et Rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les Roses,
L'espace d'un matin !

I.

SHE came to England from the island clime
Which lies beyond the far Atlantic wave ;
She died in early youth—before her time—
“ Peace to her broken heart, and virgin grave !”

II.

She was the child of Passion, and of Shame,
English her father, and of noble birth ;
Though too obscure for good or evil fame,
Her unknown mother faded from the earth.

III.

And what that fair West Indian did betide,
None knew but he, who least of all might tell,—
But that she lived, and loved, and lonely died,
And sent this orphan child with him to dwell.

IV.

Oh! that a fair and innocent young face
Should have a poison in its looks alone,
To raise up thoughts of sorrow and disgrace
And shame most bitter, although not its own!

V.

Cruel were they who flung that heavy shade
Across the life whose days did but begin;
Cruel were they who crush'd her heart, and made
Her youth pay penance for *his* youth's wild sin;

VI.

Yet so it was;—among her father's friends
A cold compassion made contempt seem light,
But, in "the world," no justice e'er defends
The victims of their tortuous wrong and right:—

VII.

And "moral England," striking down the weak,
And smiling at the vices of the strong,
On her, poor child! her parent's guilt would wreak,
And that which was her grievance, made her wrong.

VIII.

The world she understood not; nor did they
Who made that world,—her, either, understand;
The very glory of her features' play
Seem'd like the language of a foreign land;

IX.

The shadowy feelings, rich and wild and warm,
That glow'd and mantled in her lovely face,—
The slight full beauty of her youthful form,
Its gentle majesty, its pliant grace,—

X.

The languid lustre of her speaking eye,
The indolent smile of that bewitching mouth,
(Which more than all betray'd her natal sky,
And left us dreaming of the sunny South,)—

XI.

The passionate variation of her blood,
Which rose and sank, as rise and sink the waves,
With every change of her most changeful mood,
Shock'd sickly Fashion's pale and guarded slaves.

XII.

And so in this fair world she stood alone,
An alien 'mid the ever-moving crowd,
A wandering stranger, nameless and unknown,
Her claim to human kindness disallow'd.

XIII.

But oft would Passion's bold and burning gaze,
And Curiosity's set frozen stare,
Fix on her beauty in those early days,
And coarsely thus her loveliness declare ;

XIV.

Which she would shrink from, as the gentle plant,
Fern-leaved Mimosa folds itself away ;
Suffering and sad ;—for easy 'twas to daunt
One who on earth had no protecting stay.

XV.

And often to her eye's transparent lid
The unshed tears would rise with sudden start,
And sink again, as though by Reason chid,
Back to their gentle home, her wounded heart ;

XVI.

Even as some gushing fountain idly wells
Up to the prison of its marble side,
Whose power the mounting wave for ever quells,—
So rose her tears—so stemm'd by virgin pride.

XVII.

And so more lonely each succeeding day,
As she her lot did better understand,
She lived a life which had in it decay,
A flower transplanted to too cold a land,—

XVIII.

Which for a while gives out a hope of bloom,
Then fades and pines, because it may not feel
The freedom and the warmth which gave it room
The beauty of its nature to reveal.

XIX.

For vainly would the heart accept its lot
And rouse its strength to bear avow'd contempt ;
Scorn *will* be felt as scorn,—deserved or not,—
And from its bitter spell none stand exempt.

XX.

There is a basilisk power in human eyes
When they would look a fellow-creature down,
'Neath which the faint soul fascinated lies,
Struck by the cold sneer, or the with'ring frown.

XXI.

But one there was, among that cruel crowd,
Whose nature *half* rebell'd against the chain
Which fashion flung around him ; though too proud
To own that slavery's weariness and pain.

XXII.

Too proud ; perhaps too weak ; for Custom still
Curbs with an iron bit the souls born free ;
They start and chafe, yet bend them to the will
Of this most nameless ruler,—so did he.

XXIII.

And even unto *him* the worldly brand
Which rested on her, half her charm effaced ;
Vainly all pure and radiant did she stand,—
Even unto *him* she was a thing disgraced.

XXIV.

Had she been early doom'd a cloister'd nun,
To Heaven devoted by a holy vow—
His union with that poor deserted one
Had seem'd not *more* impossible than now.

XXV.

He *could* have loved her—fervently and well ;
But still the cold world, with its false allure,
Bound his free liking in an icy spell,
And made its whole foundation insecure.

XXVI.

But not like meaner souls, would he, to prove
A vulgar admiration, her pursue ;
For though his glances after her would rove,
As something beautiful, and strange, and new,

XXVII.

They were withdrawn if but her eye met his,
Or, for an instant if their light remain'd,
They soften'd into gentlest tenderness,
As asking pardon that his look had pain'd.

XXVIII.

And she was nothing unto him,—nor he
Aught unto her ; but each of each did dream
In the still hours of thought, when we are free
To quit the real world for the things which seem.

XXIX.

When in his heart Love's folded wings would stir,
And bid his youth choose out a fitting mate,
Against his will his thoughts roam'd back to her,
And all around seem'd blank and desolate.

XXX.

When, in his worldly haunts, a smother'd sigh
Told he had won some lady of the land,
The dreaming glances of *his* earnest eye
Beheld far off the Creole orphan stand ;

XXXI.

And to the beauty by his side he froze,
As though she were not fair, nor he so young,
And turn'd on her such looks of cold repose
As check'd the trembling accents of her tongue,

XXXII.

And bid her heart's dim passion seek to hide
Its gathering strength, although the task be pain,
Lest she become that mock to woman's pride—
A wretch that loves unwoo'd, and loves in vain.

XXXIII.

So in his heart she dwelt,—as one may dwell
Upon the verge of a forbidden ground ;
And oft he struggled hard to break the spell
And banish her, but vain the effort found ;

XXXIV.

For still along the winding way which led
Into his inmost soul, unbidden came
Her haunting form,—and he was visited
By echoes soft of her unspoken name,

XXXV.

Through the long night, when those we love *seem* near,
However cold, however far away,
Borne on the wings of floating dreams, which cheer
And give us strength to meet the struggling day.

XXXVI.

And when in twilight hours *she* roved apart,
Feeding her love-sick soul with visions fair,
The shadow of *his* eyes was on her heart,
And the smooth masses of his shining hair

XXXVII.

Rose in the glory of the evening light,
And, where she wander'd, glided evermore,
A star which beam'd upon her world's lone night,
Where nothing glad had ever shone before.

XXXVIII.

But vague and girlish was that love,—no hope,
Even of familiar greeting, ever cross'd
Its innocent, but, oh! most boundless scope ;
She loved him,—and she knew her love was lost.

XXXIX.

She gazed on him, as one from out a bark,
Bound onward to a cold and distant strand,
Some lovely bay, some haven fair may mark,
Stretching far inward to a sunnier land ;

XL.

Who, knowing he must still sail on, turns back
To watch with dreaming and most mournful eyes
The ruffling foam which follows in his track,
Or the deep starlight of the shoreless skies.

XLI.

Oh! many a hopeless love like this may be,—
For love will live that never looks to win ;
Gems rashly lost in Passion's stormy sea,
Not to be lifted forth when once cast in !

* * * * *

PART II.

I.

So time roll'd on, till suddenly that child
Of southern clime and feelings, droop'd and pined ;
Her cheek wax'd paler, and her eye grew wild,
And from her youthful form all strength declined.

II.

'Twas then I knew her ; late and vainly call'd,
To "minister unto a mind diseased,"—
When on her heart's faint sickness all things pall'd,
And the deep inward pain was never eased:

III.

Her step was always gentle, but at last
It fell as lightly as a wither'd leaf
In autumn hours ; and wheresoe'er she pass'd
Smiles died away, she look'd so full of grief.

IV.

And more than ever from that world, where still
Her father hoped to place her, she would shrink ;
Loving to be alone, her thirst to fill
From the sweet fountains where the dreamers drink.

V.

One eve, beneath the acacia's waving bough,
Wrapt in these lonely thoughts she sate and read ;
Her dark hair parted from her sunny brow,
Her graceful arm beneath her languid head ;

VI.

And droopingly and sad she hung above
The open page, whereon her eyes were bent,
With looks of fond regret and pining love ;
Nor heard my step, so deep was she intent.

VII.

And when she me perceived, she did not start,
But lifted up those soft dark eyes to mine,
And smiled, (that mournful smile which breaks the heart!)
Then glanced again upon the printed line.

VIII.

“What readest thou?” I ask’d. With fervent gaze,
As though she would have scann’d my inmost soul,
She turn’d to me, and, as a child obeys
The accustom’d question of revered control,

IX.

She pointed to the title of that book,
(Which, bending down, I saw was “Coralie,”)
Then gave me one imploring piteous look,
And tears, too long restrain’d, gush’d fast and free.

X.

It was a tale of one, whose fate had been
Too like her own to make that weeping strange;
Like her, transplanted from a sunnier scene;
Like her, all dull’d and blighted by the change.

XI.

No further word was breathed between us two;—
No confidence was made to keep or break;—
But since that day, which pierced my soul quite thro’,
My hand the dying girl would faintly take,

XII.

And murmur, as its grasp (ah! piteous end!)
Return'd the feeble pressure of her own,
“ Be with me to the last,—for thou, dear friend,
Hast all my struggles, all my sorrow known!”

XIII.

She died!—The pulse of that untrammell'd heart
Fainted to stillness. Those most glorious eyes
Closed on the world where she had dwelt apart,
And her cold bosom heaved no further sighs.

XIV.

She died!—and no one mourn'd, except her sire,
Who for a while look'd out with eyes more dim;
Lone was her place beside his household fire,
Vanish'd the face that ever smiled on him.

XV.

And no one said to him—“ Why mournest thou ?”
Because she was the unknown child of shame ;
(Albeit her mother better kept the vow
Of faithful love, than some who keep their fame.)

XVI.

Poor mother, and poor child!—unvalued lives!
Wan leaves that perish'd in obscurest shade!
While round me still the proud world stirs and strives,
Say, shall I weep that ye are lowly laid?

XVII.

Shall *I* mourn for ye? No!—and least for thee,
Young dreamer, whose pure heart gave way before
Thy bark was launch'd upon Love's stormy sea,
Or treachery wreck'd it on the farther shore.

XVIII.

Least, least of all for thee! Thou art gone hence!
Thee never more shall scornful looks oppress,
Thee the world wrings not with some vain pretence,
Nor chills thy tears, nor mocks at thy distress.

XIX.

From man's injustice, from the cold award
Of the unfeeling, thou hast pass'd away;
Thou 'rt at the gates of light, where angels guard
Thy path to realms of bright eternal day.

XX.

There shall thy soul its chains of slavery burst,
There, meekly standing before God's high throne,
Thou 'lt find the judgments of our earth reversed,
And answer for no errors but thine own.

TWILIGHT.

TWILIGHT.

It is the twilight hour,
The daylight toil is done,
And the last rays are departing
Of the cold and wintry sun.
It is the time when Friendship
Holds converse fair and free,
It is the time when children
Dance round the mother's knee.
But my soul is faint and heavy,
With a yearning sad and deep,
By the fireside lone and dreary
I sit me down and weep!
Where are ye, merry voices,
Whose clear and bird-like tone,
Some other ear now blesses,
Less anxious than my own?

Where are ye, steps of lightness,
Which fell like blossom-showers?
Where are ye, sounds of laughter,
That cheer'd the pleasant hours?
Thro' the dim light slow declining,
Where my wistful glances fall,
I can see your pictures hanging
Against the silent wall;—
They gleam athwart the darkness,
With their sweet and changeless eyes,
But mute are ye, my children!
No voice to mine replies.
Where are ye? Are ye playing
By the stranger's blazing hearth;
Forgetting, in your gladness,
Your old home's former mirth?
Are ye dancing? Are ye singing?
Are ye full of childish glee?
Or do your light hearts sadden
With the memory of me?
Round whom, oh! gentle darlings,
Do your young arms fondly twine,
Does she press you to *her* bosom
Who hath taken you from mine?

Oh! boys, the twilight hour
Such a heavy time hath grown,—
It recalls with such deep anguish
All I used to call my own,—
That the harshest word that ever
Was spoken to me there,
Would be trivial—would be *welcome*—
In this depth of my despair!
Yet no! Despair shall sink not,
While Life and Love remain,—
Tho' the weary struggle haunt me,
And my prayer be made in vain:
Tho' at times my spirit fail me,
And the bitter tear-drops fall,
Tho' my lot be hard and lonely,
Yet I hope—I hope thro' all!

When the mournful Jewish mother
Laid her infant down to rest,
In doubt, and fear, and sorrow,
On the water's changeful breast;

She knew not what the future
Should bring the sorely-tried :
That the Prophet of her nation,
Was the babe she sought to hide.
No! in terror wildly flying,
She hurried on her path ;
Her swoln heart full to bursting
Of woman's helpless wrath ;
Of that wrath so blent with anguish,
When we seek to shield from ill
Those feeble little creatures
Who *seem* more helpless still !
Ah! no doubt, in such an hour,
Her thoughts were harsh and wild ;
The fiercer burned her spirit,
The more she loved her child ;
No doubt, a frenzied anger
Was mingled with her fear,
When that prayer arose for justice
Which God hath sworn to hear.
He heard it! From His Heaven,
In its blue and boundless scope,
He saw that task of anguish,
And that fragile ark of hope ;

When she turn'd from that lost infant,
Her weeping eyes of love,
And the cold reeds bent beneath it—
His angels watch'd above!
She was spared the bitter sorrow
Of her young child's early death,
Or the doubt where he was carried
To draw his distant breath;
She was call'd his life to nourish
From the well-springs of her heart,
God's mercy re-uniting
Those whom man had forced apart!

Nor was *thy* woe forgotten,
Whose worn and weary feet
Were driven from thy homestead,
Through the red sand's parching heat;
Poor Hagar! scorn'd and banish'd,
That another's son might be
Sole claimant on that father,
Who felt no more for thee.

Ah! when thy dark eye wander'd,
Forlorn Egyptian slave!
Across that lurid desert,
And saw no fountain wave,—
When thy southern heart, despairing,
In the passion of its grief,
Foresaw no ray of comfort,
No shadow of relief;
But to cast the young child from thee,
That thou might'st not *see* him die,
How sank thy broken spirit—
But the Lord of Hosts was nigh!
He (He, too oft forgotten,
In sorrow as in joy)
Had will'd they should not perish—
The outcast and her boy:
The cool breeze swept across them
From the angel's waving wing,—
The fresh tide gush'd in brightness
From the fountain's living spring,—
And they stood—those two—forsaken
By all earthly love or aid,
Upheld by God's firm promise,
Serene and undismay'd!

And thou, Nain's grieving widow !
Whose task of life seem'd done,
When the pale corse lay before thee
Of thy dear and only son ;
Though Death, that fearful shadow,
Had veil'd his fair young eyes,
There was mercy for thy weeping,
There was pity for thy sighs !
The gentle voice of Jesus,
(Who the touch of sorrow knew)
The grave's cold claim arrested
E'er it hid him from thy view ;
And those loving orbs re-open'd
And knew thy mournful face,—
And the stiff limbs warm'd and bent them
With all life's moving grace,—
And his senses dawn'd and waken'd
From the dark and frozen spell,
Which death had cast around him
Whom thou did'st love so well ;
Till, like one return'd from exile
To his former home of rest,
Who speaks not, while his mother
Falls sobbing on his breast ;

But with strange bewilder'd glances
Looks round on objects near,
To recognise and welcome
All that memory held dear,—
Thy young son stood before thee
All living and restored,
And they who saw the wonder
Knelt down to praise the Lord!

The twilight hour is over!
In busier homes than mine
I can see the shadows crossing
Athwart the taper's shine;
I hear the roll of chariots
And the tread of homeward feet,
And the lamps' long rows of splendor
Gleam through the misty street.
No more I mark the objects
In my cold and cheerless room;
The fire's unheeded embers
Have sunk—and all is gloom;

But I know where hang your pictures
 Against the silent wall,
And my eyes turn sadly towards them,
 Tho' I hope—I hope thro' all.

By the summons to that mother,
 Whose fondness fate beguiled,
When the tyrant's gentle daughter
 Saved her river-floating child;—
By the sudden joy which bounded
 In the banish'd Hagar's heart,
When she saw the gushing fountain
 From the sandy desert start;—
By the living smile which greeted
 The lonely one of Nain,
When her long last watch was over
 And her hope seem'd wild and vain;—
By all the tender mercy
 God hath shown to human grief,
When fate or man's perverseness
 Denied and barr'd relief,—

By the helpless woe which taught me
To look to him alone,
From the vain appeals for justice
And wild efforts of my own,—
By thy light—thou unseen future,
And thy tears—thou bitter past,
I will hope—tho' all forsake me,
In His mercy to the last!

December, 1838.

A DESTINY.

A DESTINY.

I.

THERE was a lady, who had early wed
One whom she saw and lov'd in her bright youth,
When life was yet untried—and when he said
He, too, lov'd her, he spoke no more than truth ;
He lov'd as well as baser natures can,—
But a mean heart and soul were in that man.

II.

And they dwelt happily, if happy be
Not with harsh words to breed unnatural strife :
The cold world's Argus-watching failed to see
The flaw that dimm'd the lustre of their life ;
Save that he seem'd tyrannical, tho' gay,
Restless and selfish in his love of sway.

III.

The calm of conscious power was not in him ;
But rather, struggling into broader light,
The secret sense, they feel, however dim,
Whose chance position gives a sort of right
(As from the height of a prescriptive throne,)
To govern natures nobler than their own.

IV.

And as her youth waned slowly on, there fell
A nameless shadow on that lady's heart ;
And those she lov'd the best (and she lov'd well),
Had of her confidence nor share, nor part ;
Her thoughts lay folded from Life's lessening light,
Like the sweet flowers which close themselves at night.

V.

And men began to whisper evil things
Against the honour of her wedded mate ;
That which had pass'd for youth's wild wanderings,
Showed more suspicious in his settled state ;
Until at length,—he stood, at some chance game,
Discover'd,—branded with a Cheater's name.

VI.

Out, and away he slunk, with felon air ;
Then, calling to him one who was his friend,
Bid him to that unblemish'd wife repair
And tell her what had chanced, and what the end ;
How they must leave the country of their birth,
And hide,—in some more distant spot of earth.

VII.

It was a coward's thought : he could not bear
Himself to be narrator of his shame ;
He that had trampled oft, now felt in fear
Of her who still must keep his blighted name,—
And shrank in fancy from that steadfast eye,
The window to a soul so pure and high.

VIII.

She heard it. O'er her brow there pass'd a flush
Of sunset red ; and then so white a hue,
So deadly pale, it seem'd as if no blush
Through that transparent cheek should shine anew ;
As if the blood had frozen in that hour,
And her check'd pulse for ever lost its power.

IX.

And twice and once did she essay to speak ;
And with a gesture almost of command,
(Though in its motion it was deadly weak)
She faintly lifted up her graceful hand :—
But then her soul came back to her, strength woke,
And with a low but even voice, she spoke :

X.

“ Go ! say to him who dream’d of other chance,
That HERE none sit in judgment on his sin ;
That to his door the world’s scorn may advance,
And cloud his path, but doth not enter in.
Here dwell his Own : to share, to soothe disgrace ;”—
Which having said, she cover’d up her face,

XI.

And, as he left her, sank in bitter prayer,—
If prayer that may be term’d which comes to all,
That sudden gushing of our vain despair,
When none but God can hear or heed our call ;
And the wreck’d soul feels, in its helpless hour,
Where only dwells full mercy with full power.

XII.

And he came home, a crush'd and humbled wretch ;
Whom when she saw, she but this comfort found,
In her kind arms that shrinking form to catch,
Which tenderly about his neck she wound,
As in the first proud days of love and trust,
E'er yet his reckless head was bow'd in dust !

XIII.

And they departed to a distant shore ;
But wheresoe'er they dwelt, however lone,
Shame, like a marble statue at his door,
Flung her 'thwart shadow o'er his threshold stone ;
Still darken'd all their daylight hours, and kept
Cold watch above them even while they slept.

XIV.

And there was no more love between those two !
It died not in the shock of that dark hour—
Such shocks destroy not love, whose purple hue
Fades rather, like some autumn-wither'd flower,
Which day by day along the ruin'd walk
We see—then miss it from the sapless stalk ;

XV.

And, while it fadeth, oft with gentle hand
Doth memory turn to life's dark journal-book ;
And, passing foul misdeeds, intently stand
On its first page of glorious hope to look ;
Weeping she reads,—and, seeing all so fair,
Pleads hard for what we *are*, by what we *were* !

XVI.

So through that hour love lived ; and, though in part
'Twas one of most unutterable pain,
It had its sweetness too, and told her heart
All she could do, and all she could sustain ;
The holy love of woman buoy'd her up,
And God gave strength to drink the bitter cup.

XVII.

But when, as days crept on, she saw him still
Less grateful than abash'd beneath her eye,
And studying not how best to banish ill,
But what he might conceal and what deny,
Her soul revolted, and conceived a scorn,
Sinful and harsh, although of virtue born.

XVIII.

And oft she pray'd, with earnestness and pain,
That heaven would bid that proud contempt depart,
And wept to find the prayer and effort vain,
Though it was breathed in agony of heart—
Vain as the murmur of "Thy will be done,"
Breathed by the death-bed of an only son!

XIX.

For when her children err'd (as children will)
A sickening terror smote her heart with fears,
And scarce she measured the degree of ill,
Or made indulgence for their tender years;
They were HIS children; and the chance of shame
Kept watch for those who bore that father's name.

XX.

And, thinking thus, reproof would take a tone
So strangely passionate, severe, and wild,—
So deeply alter'd,—so unlike her own,—
It stung and terrified her startled child,
Whose innate sense of justice seem'd to show
Him over-chidden, being chidden so.

XXI.

And then a gush of mother's love would swell
Her grieving heart,—and she would fondly press
The young offending head she loved so well
Close to her own, with many a soft caress,
Whose reconciling sweetness all in vain
Stopp'd her boy's tears, while her's ran down like rain.

XXII.

The world (which still pronounces from the show
Of outward things) whisper'd and talk'd of this ;
Erring and obstinate, its crowds ne'er know
How much in judging they may judge amiss,
Or how much agony and broken peace
May lie beneath the seeming of caprice !

XXIII.

But he, her husband (for he was not dull),
Saw through these workings of a troubled mind,
And, that her cup of sorrow might be full,
He taunted her with words and looks unkind,
Which with a patient bowing of the heart
She took—like one resolved to do her part.

XXIV.

And years stole on (for years go by like days,
Leaving but scatter'd hours to mark their course),
And brightness faded from that lady's gaze,
And her cheek hollow'd, and her step lost force,
Till it was plain to even a careless eye
That she was doom'd, before her time, to die.

XXV.

She died, as she had lived, her secret soul
Shut from the sweet communion of true friends ;
Her words, though not her thoughts, she could control,
And still with calm respect his name she blends :
They all stood round her whom she call'd her Own,
And saw her die—yet was that death-bed lone !

XXVI.

But in its darkest hour her thoughts were stirr'd,
And something falter'd from her dying tongue,
Mournful and tender—half pronounced, half heard—
For which *he* was too base—his boys too young ;
So, whatso'er the warning faintly given,
It lay between her parting soul and Heaven.

XXVII.

He wept for her—ah! who would *not* have wept
To see that worn face in its pallid shroud,
Proving how much she suffer'd ere she slept
At peace for ever! Violent and loud
Was the outbreaking of his sudden grief,
And, like all feelings in that heart, 'twas brief.

XXVIII.

And something strange pass'd o'er his soul instead,
When thinking upon her whom he had lost,
Almost like a *relief* that she was dead:—
She, whose high nature scorn'd his fault the most,
And show'd it least,—had vanish'd from the earth
And none could check his sin, or shame his mirth.

XXIX.

So he return'd to many an evil way,
Like one who strays when guiding light is gone;
And mid the profligate, miscall'd "the gay,"
Crept to a slippery place—his tale half known—
Ill look'd on, yet endured—the useful tool
Of every bolder knave, or richer fool.

XXX.

And his two sons in careless beauty grew,
Like wild-flowers in his path: he mark'd them not,
Nor reck'd he what they needed, learnt, or knew,
Or what might be on earth their future lot;
But they died young—which is a thought of rest!—
Unscorn'd, untempted, undefiled—so best.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE CHAPEL ROYAL ST. JAMES'S,

ON THE 10TH FEBRUARY, 1840.

I.

ONCE more the people meet,
With glad expectant faces : once again
The fair young monarch and her lovely train,
With slow and gentle feet,
Move in a solemn ceremony on ;
And jewels glitter in the morning sun !

II.

Not long, oh ! Time, not long
It seems, since crown'd as Britain's welcome Queen,
The like fair sight in fair array was seen ;
And the hush'd listening throng,
Watching those steps thro' Westminster's proud aisle,
Wept with full hearts, tho' joyous all the while.

III.

And they come forth anew,
 In bridal white, that gentle virgin band,
 The chosen flowers of Britain's happy land;
 For holy love and true
 Hath wrought an hour of hope without alloy—
 A fairy sight of splendour and of joy.

IV.

There,—with her locks of light,
 Gleaming like gold around her noble head,—
 The orphan'd ELEANOR, with stately tread, (1)
 Went by, a vision bright;
 Bidding sweet thoughts of love and triumph start
 Into a father's and a sister's heart.

V.

There,—in her beauty, pass'd
 Young FRANCES COWPER; her transparent cheek
 Blushing the greetings which she might not speak,
 As on the crowd she cast
 The shy soft glances of those dark-blue eyes,
 In whose unfathom'd depth such sweetness lies!

VI.

There (with the spotless name),
The gentle HOWARDS, good, and fair, and mild,
And bright-eyed BOUVERIE, noble Radnor's child,
And rose-bud VILLIERS came ;
And, with her sweet frank smile, young IDA HAY,
Looking all gladness, like a morn in May.

VII.

There, brilliant LENNOX moved ;
The Paget beauty shining from her brow,
And the dark, deer-like eyes that glanced below :
While, gentle and beloved,
Amid the glories of that courtly throng,
DELAWARR's youthful daughter pass'd along.

VIII.

There, (theme for poet's praise !)
With swanlike throat, and clear majestic eye,
VERULAM's stately MARY glided by ;—
And, with her quiet gaze
Fix'd smiling on the scene which she survey'd,
The soldier ANGLESEA's bright ADELAIDE.

IX.

And she, whose orbs of blue,
Like mountain lakes beheld by moonlight, gleam
With all the shadowy softness of a dream
Such as Endymion knew:
Whose glossy locks with rich luxuriance twine
Around her brow: the Lady WILHELMINE.

X.

Young were they all—and fair,—
But thou, VICTORIA, held'st thy fitting place,
As amongst garden-flowers the lily's grace,
Blooms with a royal air;
And from that lovely various group, apart,
Dids't stand, and gently look the Queen thou art.

XI.

The smile thy young lip wore,
Spoke joy to Him, who, from his distant home,
Hath sped in wintry time o'er ocean's foam—
To seek our island shore,
With his frank heart, and brow so fair and true,
Claiming thy love—and England's welcome too.

XII.

Oh! may that welcome prove
 The herald of deep gladness ;—since in thee
 Old England's brightest hopes renew'd we see,
 All-hallow'd be thy love ;
 And still with proud content the day allied,
 When Princely ALBERT claim'd his Royal Bride!

XIII.

May He, whose gifted hand,
 Hath twined sweet wreaths of Poetry and Song ; (2)
 Live happy among English hearts so long
 That, native to the land,
 He shall forget that e'er his harp was strung
 To any accents but our mother-tongue :

XIV.

And Thou,—Oh! may the Crown
 Which in youth's freshest, earliest moment, graced
 The brow, whose childhood's roses it replaced,
 Ne'er weigh thy spirit down ;
 Nor tearful hours, nor careful thoughts, beguile
 One ray of gladness from thy gracious smile :

XV.

But brightly to the last,
Fair Fortune shine, with calm and steady ray,
Upon the tenor of thy happy way;

A future like the past:
And every prayer by loyal subjects said,
Bring down a separate blessing on thy head!

NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Page 126.

“The orphan'd ELEANOR, with stately tread.”

The exact order in which the young ladies present on this eventful occasion, as trainbearers, followed Her Majesty, is not preserved in the poem; the names being necessarily arranged as would suit the verse. Taking the names in the order of the poem, the trainbearers were,—The LADY ELEANOR PAGET, daughter of the EARL OF UXBRIDGE (Lord Chamberlain to the Queen), by his first Countess. The LADY FANNY COWPER, daughter of COUNTESS COWPER (now VISCOUNTESS PALMERSTON). The LADY E. HOWARD, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS OF CARLISLE, and sister of the DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND. The LADY MARY HOWARD, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS OF SURREY. The LADY ANNE BOUVERIE, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS OF RADNOR. The LADY SARAH VILLIERS, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS OF JERSEY. The LADY IDA HAY, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS OF ERROL. The LADY CAROLINE LENNOX, daughter of the DUKE and DUCHESS OF RICHMOND. The LADY ELIZABETH WEST, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS DELAWARR. The LADY MARY GRIMSTONE, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS OF VERULAM. The

LADY ADELAIDE PAGET, daughter of the MARQUIS and MARCHIONESS OF ANGLESEA. The LADY WILHELMINE STANHOPE, daughter of the EARL and COUNTESS STANHOPE.

NOTE 2.—Page 129.

*“ May He, whose gifted hand
Hath twined sweet wreaths of Poetry and Song.”*

His Royal Highness Prince Albert is himself a poet and musician; and some of his early compositions, written in German and set to music, have been lately published in this country.

ON SEEING ANTHONY,

THE ELDEST CHILD OF

LORD AND LADY ASHLEY.

I.

It was a fair and gentle child
 Stood leaning by his mother's knee ;
His noble brow was smooth and mild—
 His eyes shone bright with frolic glee—
And he was stately, though so young ;
As from a noble lineage sprung.

II.

So, gazing on him, as we gaze
 Upon a bud, whose promise yet
Lies shut from all the glowing rays
 Which afterwards illumine it :
I marvell'd what the fruit might be
When that fair plant became a tree.

III.

Ah! then, what dreams of proud success,
That lordly brow of beauty brought,
With all its infant stateliness,
And all its unripe power of thought!
What triumphs, boundless, unconfined,
Came crowding on my wand'ring mind!

IV.

I gave that child, the voice might hold
A future senate in command;
Head clear and prompt—heart true and bold—
As quick to act as understand:
I dream'd the scholar's fame achieved—
The hero's wreath of laurel weaved!

V.

But as I mused, a whisper came
Which (like a friend's reproachful tone,
Whose gentleness can smite with shame
Far more than fiercest word or frown;)
Roused my vex'd conscience by its spell,
And thus the whisper'd warning fell:—

VI.

“ Ah ! let the shrouded future be,
 With all its weight of distant care !
Cloud not with dreams of vanity
 That blue bright eye, and forehead fair !
Nor cast *thy* worldly hopes and fears
In shadow o’er his happy years !

VII.

“ Desire not, even in thy dreams,
 To hasten those remoter hours
Which, bright although their promise seems,
 Must strip his spring-time of its flowers !—
What triumph, in the time to come,
Shall match these early days of *home* ?

VIII.

“ *This* is the Eden of his life,—
 His little heart bounds glad and free :
Amid a world of toil and strife,
 All independent smileth he !
Nor dreams by that sweet mother’s side
Of dark Ambition’s restless pride.

IX.

“ But, like a bird in winter,—still
Fill'd with a sweet and natural joy,
Tho' frost lies bleak upon the hill,
And mists obscure the cold grey sky,
Which sings, tho' on a leafless bough,—
He smiles, even at the gloomiest brow !”

X.

Oh ! looking on a child's fair face
Methinks should purify the heart ;
As angel presences have grace
To bid the darker powers depart,
And glorify our grosser sense
With a reflected innocence !

XI.

And seeing thee, thou lovely boy,
My soul, reproach'd, gave up its schemes
Of worldly triumph's heartless joy,
For purer and more sinless dreams,
And mingled in my farewell there
Something of *blessing* and of *prayer*.

THE DYING HOUR.

“ Te teneam moriens, deficiente manu.”

I.

OH! watch me ; watch me still
Thro' the long night's dreary hours,
Uphold by thy firm will
Worn Nature's sinking powers !

II.

While yet *thy* face is there
(The loose locks round it flying),
So young, and fresh, and fair,
I feel not I am dying !

III.

Stoop down, and kiss my brow !
The shadows round me closing
Warn me that dark and low
I soon shall be reposing.

IV.

But while those pitying eyes
Are bending thus above me,
In vain the death-dews rise,—
Thou dost regret and love me !

V.

Then watch me thro' the night,
Thro' my broken, fitful slumber ;
By the pale lamp's sickly light
My dying moments number !

VI.

Thy fond and patient smile
Shall soothe my painful waking ;
Thy voice shall cheer me while
The slow grey dawn is breaking !

VII.

The battle-slain, whose thirst
No kindly hand assuages,
Whose low faint farewells burst
Unheard, while combat rages,—

VIII.

The exiled, near whose bed
Some vision'd form seems weeping,
Whose steps shall never tread
The land where he lies sleeping,—

IX.

The drown'd, whose parting breath
Is caught by wild winds only,—
Theirs is the bitter death,
Beloved, for they die lonely!

X.

But thus, tho' rack'd, to lie,
Thou near, tho' full of sadness,
Leaves still, e'en while I die,
A lingering gleam of gladness!

XI.

I feel not half my pain
When to mine thy fond lip presses,—
I warm to life again
Beneath thy soft caresses!

XII.

Once more, oh! yet once more
 Fling, fling thy white arms round me,
As oft in days of yore
 Their gentle clasp hath bound me;

XIII.

And hold me to that breast
 Which heaves so full with sorrow—
Who knows where I may rest
 In the dark and blank to-morrow?

XIV.

Ah! weep not—it shall be
 An after-thought to cheer thee,
That while mine eyes *could* see,
 And while mine ears could hear thee—

XV.

Thy voice and smile were still
 The spells on which I doated,
And thou, through good and ill,
 To me and mine devoted!

XVI.

And calmly by my tomb,
When the low bright day declineth,
And athwart the cypress gloom
The mellow sunset shineth,—

XVII.

Thou'lt sit and think of Him,
Who, of Heaven's immortal splendour,
Had a dream on earth, though dim,
In thy love so pure and tender,—

XVIII.

Who scarcely feels thy touch,—
Whom thy voice can rouse no longer,—
But whose love on earth was such,
That only death was stronger.

XIX.

Yes, sit, but not in tears!
Thine eyes in faith uplifting,
From thy lot of changeful years,
To the Heaven where naught is shifting.

XX.

From this world, where all who love
Are doomed alike to sever,
To the glorious realms above,
Where they dwell in peace for ever!

XXI.

And then such hope shall beam
From the grave where I lie sleeping,
This bitter hour shall seem
Too vague and far for weeping—

XXII.

And grief—ah! hold me now!
My fluttering pulse is failing,—
The death-dews chill my brow,—
The morning light is paling!

XXIII.

I seek thy gaze in vain,—
Earth reels and fades before me;
I die!—but feel no pain,—
Thy sweet face shining o'er me!

I CANNOT LOVE THEE!

[Attention having been called to the following Poem by those who have favourably reviewed my book, it is perhaps only fair to state that the idea was taken, and amplified from a French ballad.]

I CANNOT love thee, tho' thy soul
Be one which all good thoughts control ;
Altho' thy eyes be starry bright,
And the gleams of golden light
Fall upon thy silken hair,
And thy forehead, broad and fair ;
Something of a cold disgust,
(Wonderful, and most unjust,)
Something of a sullen fear
Weighs my heart when thou art near ;
And my soul, which cannot twine
Thought or sympathy with thine,
With a coward instinct tries
To hide from thy enamour'd eyes,
Wishing for a sudden blindness
To escape those looks of kindness .

Sad she folds her shivering wings
From the love thy spirit brings,
Like a chainéd thing, caress'd
By the hand it knows the best,
By the hand which, day by day,
Visits its imprison'd stay,
Bringing gifts of fruit and blossom
From the green earth's plenteous bosom ;
All but that for which it pines
In those narrow close confines,
With a sad and ceaseless sigh—
Wild and wingéd Liberty!

Can it be, no instinct dwells
In th' immortal soul, which tells
That thy love, oh! human brother,
Is unwelcome to another?
Can the changeful wavering eye,
Raised to thine in forced reply,—
Can the cold constrainéd smile,
Shrinking from thee all the while,—
Satisfy thy heart, or prove
Such a likeness of true love?

Seems to me, that I should guess
By what a world of bitterness,
By what a gulf of hopeless care,
Our two hearts divided were :
Seems to me that I should know
All the dread that lurk'd below,
By the want of answer found
In the voice's trembling sound ;
By the unresponsive gaze ;
By the smile which vainly plays,
In whose cold imperfect birth
Glow no fondness, lives no mirth ;
By the sigh, whose different tone
Hath no echo of thine own ;
By the hand's cold clasp, which still
Held as not of its free will,
Shrinks, as it for freedom yearn'd ;—
That my love was unreturn'd.

When thy tongue (ah ! woe is me !)
Whispers love-vows tenderly,
Mine is shaping, all unheard,
Fragments of some withering word,

Which, by its complete farewell,
Shall divide us like a spell!
And my heart beats loud and fast,
Wishing that confession past;
And the tide of anguish rises,
Till its strength my soul surprises,
And the reckless words, unspoken,
Nearly have the silence broken,
With a gush like some wild river,—
“ Oh! depart, depart for ever!”

But my faltering courage fails,
And my drooping spirit quails;
So sweet-earnest looks thy smile
Full of tenderness the while,
And with such strange pow'r are gifted
The eyes to which my own are lifted;
So my faint heart dies away,
And my lip can nothing say,
And I long to be alone,—
For I weep when thou art gone!

Yes, I weep, but then my soul,
Free to ponder o'er the whole,

Free from fears which check'd its thought,
And the pain thy presence brought,
Whispers me the useless lie,—
“ For thy love he will not die,
Such pity is but vanity.”
And I bend my weary head
O'er the tablets open spread,
Whose fair pages me invite
All I dared not say to write ;
And my fingers take the pen,
And my heart feels braced again
With a resolute intent ;—
But, ere yet that page be sent,
Once I view the written words
Which must break *thy* true heart's chords ;
And a vision, piercing bright,
Rises on my coward sight,
Of thy fond hand, gladly taking
What must set thy bosom aching ;
While too soon the brittle seal
Bids the page the worst reveal,
Blending in thy eager gaze—
Scorn, and anguish, and amaze.

Powerless, then, my hand reposes
On the tablet which it closes,
With a cold and shivering sense
Born of Truth's omnipotence :
And my weeping blots the leaves,
And my sinking spirit grieves,
Humbled in that bitter hour
By very consciousness of power!
What am I, that I should be
Such a source of woe to thee?
What am I, that I should dare
Thus to play with thy despair,
And persuade myself that thou
Wilt not bend beneath the blow?

Rather should my conscience move
Me to think of this vain love,
Which my life of peace beguiles,
As a tax on foolish smiles,
Which—like light not meant for one
Who, wandering in the dark alone,
Hath yet been tempted by its ray
To turn aside and lose his way—

Binds me, by their careless sin,
To take the misled wanderer in.

And I praise thee, as I go,
Wandering, weary, full of woe,
To my own unwilling heart ;
Cheating it to take thy part
By rehearsing each rare merit
Which thy nature doth inherit.
To myself their list I give,
Most prosaic, positive :—
How thy heart is good and true,
And thy face most fair to view ;
How the powers of thy mind
Flatterers in the wisest find,
And the talents God hath given
Seem as held in trust for Heaven ;
Labouring on for noble ends,—
Steady to thy boyhood's friends,—
Slow to give, or take, offence,—
Full of earnest eloquence,—
Hopeful, eager, gay of cheer,—
Frank in all thy dealings here,—

Ready to redress the wrong
Of the weak against the strong,—
Keeping up an honest pride
With those the world hath deified,
But gently bending heart and brow
To the helpless and the low ;—
How, in brief, there dwells in thee
All that 's generous and free,
All that may most aptly move
My Spirit to an answering love.

But in vain the tale is told ;
Still my heart lies dead and cold,
Still it wanders and rebels
From the thought that thus compels,
And refuses to rejoice
Save in unconstrain'd choice.

Therefore, when thine eyes shall read
This, my book, oh take thou heed !
In the dim lines written here,
All shall be explained and clear ;

All my lips could never speak
When my heart grew coward-weak,—
All my hand could never write,
Tho' I planned it day and night,—
All shall be at length confest,
And thou'lt forgive,—and let me rest!
None but thou and I shall know
Whose the doom, and whose the woe;
None but thou and I shall share
In the secret printed there;
It shall be a secret still,
Tho' all look on it at will;
And the eye shall read in vain
What the heart cannot explain.
Each one, baffled in his turn,
Shall no more its aim discern,
Than a wanderer who might look
On some wizard's magic book,
Of the darkly-worded spell
Where deep-hidden meanings dwell.
Memory, fancy, they shall task
This sad riddle to unmask,—
Or, with bold conjectural fame,
Fit the pages with a name;—

But nothing shall they understand,
And vainly shall the stranger's hand
Essay to fling the leaves apart,
Which bear MY message to THY heart !

THE POET'S CHOICE.

I.

'Twas in youth, that hour of dreaming ;
Round me, visions fair were beaming,
Golden fancies, brightly gleaming,
Such as start to birth
When the wandering restless mind,
Drunk with beauty, thinks to find
Creatures of a fairy kind
Realised on Earth!

II.

Then, for me, in every dell
Hamadryads seem'd to dwell
(They who die, as Poets tell,
Each with her own tree);
And sweet mermaids, low reclining,
Dim light through their grottos shining,
Green weeds round their soft limbs twining,
Peopled the deep Sea.

III.

Then, when moon and stars were fair,
Nymph-like visions fill'd the air,
With blue wings and golden hair
 Bending from the skies ;
And each cave by echo haunted
In its depth of shadow granted,
Brightly, the Egeria wanted,
 To my eager eyes.

IV.

But those glories pass'd away ;
Earth seem'd left to dull decay,
And my heart in sadness lay,
 Desolate, uncheer'd ;
Like one wrapt in painful sleeping,
Pining, thirsting, waking, weeping,
Watch thro' Life's dark midnight keeping,
 Till THY form appear'd !

VII.

And my soul,—like some sweet bird
Whose song at summer eve is heard,
When the breeze, so lightly stirr'd,
 Leaves the branch unbent,—
Sits and all-triumphant sings,
Folding up her brooding wings,
And gazing out on earthly things
 With a calm content.

THE GERMAN STUDENT'S LOVE-SONG.

“ Ich liebe dich !”

I.

By the rush of the Rhine's broad stream,

Down whose rapid tide

We sailed as in some sweet dream

Sitting side by side ;

By the depth of its clear blue wave

And the vine-clad hills,

Which gazed on its heart and gave

Their tribute rills ;

By the mountains, in purple shade,

And those valleys green

Where our bower of rest was made,

By the world unseen ;

By the notes of the wild free bird,
Singing over-head,
When nought else in the sunshine stirr'd
Round our flowery bed ;

By these, and by Love's power divine,
I have no thought but what is thine !

II.

By the glance of thy radiant eyes,
Where a glory shone
That was half of the summer skies
And half their own ;
By the light and yet fervent hold
Of thy gentle hand,—
(As the woodbines the flowers enfold
With their tender band ;)

By thy voice when it breathes in song,
And the echo given
By lips that to Earth belong,
Float up to Heaven ;

By the gleams on thy silken hair
At the sunset hour,
And the breadth of thy forehead fair
With its thoughtful power ;

By these, and by Love's soul divine,
I have no hope but what is thine!

III.

By the beauty and stillness round
When the lake's lone shore
Scarce echoed the pleasant sound
Of the distant oar ;
By the moonlight which softly fell
On all objects near,
When thy whisper seemed like a spell
In thy Lover's ear ;

By the dreams of the restless past,
And the hope that came
Like sunshine in shadow cast
With thy gentle name ;

By the beat of thy good true heart
Where pure thoughts have birth ;
By thy tears, when Fate bade us part,
And thy smiles of mirth ;

By these, and by Love's power divine,
I have no hope but what is thine!

IV.

By the gloom of those holy fanes
Where the light stream'd through
Dim orange and purple panes
On the aisles below ;
By the ruin'd and roofless wall
Of that castle high,
With its turrets so grey and tall
In the clear blue sky ;

By beauty, because its light
Should thy portion be,
And whatever is fair and bright
Seems a part of thee ;

And by darkness and blank decay,
Because they tell
What the world would be, THOU away,
Whom I love so well;

By these, and by Love's power divine,
My heart, my soul, my life, are thine!

THE HUNTING-HORN OF CHARLEMAGNE.

[Among other relics preserved in the Cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle is the ivory hunting-horn of Charlemagne. It is massive and heavy, and the attempt of the guide to sound it (for the amusement of tourists and strangers) is singularly unsuccessful, the note produced being the most faint and lugubrious which it is possible to conceive.]

SOUND not the Horn!—the guarded relic keep :
A faithful sharer of its master's sleep :
His life it gladden'd—to his life belong'd,—
Pause—ere thy lip the royal dead hath wrong'd.
Its weary weight but mocks thy feeble hand ;
Its desolate note, the shrine wherein we stand.
Not such the sound it gave in days of yore,
When that rich belt a monarch's bosom wore,—
Not such the sound ! Far over hill and dell
It waked the echoes with triumphant swell ;

Heard midst the rushing of the torrent's fall,
From castled crag to roofless ruin'd hall,
Down the ravine's precipitous descent,
Thro' the wild forest's rustling boughs it went,
Upon the lake's blue bosom linger'd fond,
And faintly answer'd from the hills beyond :

Pause!—the free winds that joyous blast have borne :—
Dead is the hunter!—silent be the horn !

Sound not the horn ! Bethink thee of the day
When to the chase an Emperor led the way ;
In all the pride of manhood's noblest prime,
Untamed by sorrow, and untired by time,
Life's pulses throbbing in his eager breast,
Glad, active, vigorous,—who is now at rest :—
How he gazed round him with his eagle eye,
Leapt the dark rocks that frown against the sky,
Grasp'd the long spear, and curb'd the panting steed
(Whose fine nerves quiver with his headlong speed),
At the wild cry of danger smiled in scorn,
And firmly sounded that re-echoing horn !

Ah! let no touch the ivory tube profane
Which drank the breath of *living* Charlemagne ;
Let not like blast by meaner lips be blown,
But by the hunter's side the horn lay down!

Or, following to his palace, dream we now
Not of the hunter's strength, or forest bough,
But woman's love! HER offering this, perchance,—
This, granted to each stranger's casual glance,
This, gazed upon with coldly curious eyes,
Was giv'n with blushes, and received with sighs!
We see her not;—no mournful angel stands
To guard her love-gift from our careless hands ;
But fancy brings a vision to our view—
A woman's form, the trusted and the true :
The strong to suffer, tho' so weak to dare,
Patient to watch thro' many a day of care,
Devoted, anxious, generous, void of guile,
And with her whole heart's welcome in her smile ;
Even such I see! Her maidens, too, are there,
And wake, with chorus sweet, some native air ;
But tho' her proud heart holds her country dear,
And tho' she loves those happy songs to hear,

She bids the tale be hush'd, the harp be still,
For one faint blast that dies along the hill.
Up, up, she springs ; her young head backward thrown ;
“ He comes ! my hunter comes !—Mine own—mine own !”

She loves, and she is loved—her gift is worn—
'Tis fancy, all !—And yet—lay down the horn !

Love—life—what are ye ?—since to love and live
No surer record to our times can give !
Low lies the hero now, whose spoken name
Could fire with glory, or with love inflame ;
Low lies the arm of might, the form of pride,
And dim tradition dreameth by his side.
Desolate stand those painted palace-halls,
And gradual ruin mines the massy walls,
Where frank hearts greeted many a welcome guest,
And loudly rang the beaker and the jest ;—
While *here*, within this chapel's narrow bound,
Whose frozen silence startles to the sound
Of stranger voices ringing thro' the air,
Or faintly echoes many a humble prayer ;

Here, where the window, narrow arch'd, and high,
With jealous bars shuts out the free blue sky,—
Where glimmers down, with various-painted ray,
A prison'd portion of God's glorious day,—
Where never comes the breezy breath of morn,
Here mighty hunter, feebly wakes thy horn!

THE FAITHFUL FRIEND.

“Coming through the churchyard here, I espied a young man who had flung himself down on a grave to weep, and who ever and anon repeated, with most passionate lamentations, ‘O, friend! faithful friend!’ Respecting his grief, I passed on, marvelling as I went what manner of man he had been who slept under that stone.”—*Letters of a Tourist.*

O, FRIEND! whose heart the grave doth shroud from human
joy or woe,
Know'st thou who wanders by thy tomb, with footsteps sad
and slow?
Know'st thou whose brow is dark with grief? whose eyes
are dim with tears?
Whose restless soul is sinking with its agony of fears?
Whose hope hath fail'd, whose star hath sunk, whose firmest
trust deceived,
Since, leaning on thy faithful breast, he loved and he
believed?

'Tis I!—Return and comfort me, for old remembrance'
sake,—

From the long silence of the tomb—the cheerless tomb—
awake!

I listen—all is still as death—no welcome step is nigh,—

I call thee, but thou answerest not—the grave hath no
reply!

But mournfully the strange bright sun shines on thy funeral
stone,

And sadly, in the cypress bough, the wild wind makes her
moan.

When we were young, and cheerfully the promised
future glow'd,

I little thought to stand alone by this thy last abode ;

I little thought, in early days, O generous and kind !

That THOU, the first, shouldst quit the earth, and leave me,
wreck'd, behind.

Thine was the pure unjealous love ! I know they told us
then

That Genius's gifts divided me from dull and common men ;

That thou wert slow to science ; that the chart and letter'd
page

Had in them no deep spell whereby thy spirit to engage ;
But rather thou wouldst sail thy boat, or sound thy bugle
horn,

Or track the sportsman's triumph thro' the fields of waving
corn,

Than o'er the pond'rous histories of other ages bend,

Or dwell upon the sweetest page that poet ever penn'd :

And it was true ! Our minds were cast as pleased the will
of Heaven,

And different powers unto me, and unto thee, were given !

No trick of talent deck'd thy speech and glorified thy
youth,—

Its simple spell of eloquence lay in its earnest truth ;

Nor was the gladsome kindness which brighten'd on thy
brow,

The beauty which in fiction wins Love's fond romantic vow ;

But gazing on thine honest face, intelligently bold,

Oft have I doubted of the gifts which men so precious
hold,—

Wit, learning, wealth, seem'd overprized, since thou, dear
friend, couldst be

So closely knit unto my heart by thy simplicity.

The worldly-wise may sneer at this, and scorn thee, if
they will,—

THY judgment was not sharpen'd by the cunning of their
skill ;

No deep and calculating thoughts lay buried in thy breast,
To chill and vex thy honest heart, and startle it from rest ;
No dream of cold philosophy, to make thee doubt and sigh,
And fawn and flatter half thy kind, and pass the others by !
And there thou liest forgotten—thou faithful friend, and
true—

Thy resting-place beneath the cold damp shadow of the
yew ;

And quietly within the tomb's dark precincts wert thou
laid,

As a faded leaf unnoticed drops within the forest's shade.

How should the world have tears for thee?—the world
hath nothing lost—

No parent's high ambitious hope THY early death hath
cross ;

No sculptured falsehood gives to fame thy monumental
stone,—

From the glory of our Senate-house, no orator is gone :

Science hath lost no well-known name,—no soldier's heart
shall bound,

Linking old England's victories with that inglorious
sound ;

No jealous and tomb-trampling foe shall find it worth his
while,

With a false history of thy acts, thy country to beguile ;

No mercenary hand in haste prepare the letter'd tome,

And publicly reveal the fond small weaknesses of Home ;

Nor some vainglorious friend (who yet hath lov'd thee to
the last)

Permit all men to buy and sell his records of the past ;

Nor give thy living letters up, nor print thy dying words ;

Nor sweep with sacrilegious hand Affection's holy chords ;

Nor with a frozen after-thought dissect thy generous
heart,

And count each pulse that bid thy blood gush with a quicker
start.

No! Blest OBSCURITY was thine! In sacred darkness
dwells

The mem'ry of THY last fond looks and faltering fare-
wells ;

And none shall drag thy actions forth, for Slander or for
Praise,

To that broad light which never glowed round thy unnoticed days.

At times a recollected jest, or snatch of merry song,
Which was so *thine*, that still to thee its ringing notes
belong,

To boon companions back again thy image may recal,—
But lightly sits thy memory, oh Faithful Friend, on all!
The old house still hath echoes glad; tho' silent be thy
voice,

Thy empty place at bed and board forbids not to rejoice!
Still with its white and gleaming sail, by strangers launch'd
to float

Across the blue lake in the sun, glides on thy little boat;
Thy steed another rider backs,—thy dogs new masters find,
But I,—*I* mourn thy absence still, thou generous and kind:
Since I have lost thy pleasant smile, and voice of ringing
mirth,

A silence and a darkness seem come down upon the earth;
A weight sits heavy on my heart, and clogs my weary
feet,

For, wander where I will, *thy* glance I never more shall
meet.

I cannot knit my soul again ; my thoughts are wide astray
When others by my side would wile an hour or two away ;
My door flings wide to welcome in some less familiar
face,

And my heart struggles hard to fill thy ever vacant place ;
But all in vain ! Dim thoughts of THEE across my bosom
steal,

And still, the louder mirth around, the lonelier I feel ;
Yea, even that should make me proud, the laurel wreath of
Fame

But brings me back, in bitterness, the echo of thy
name ;

But brings me back thy cheerful smile, when yet a careless
boy,

Mine was the toil, but thou didst share the glory and the
joy ;

And bright across the awarded prize thy kind eye answer'd
mine,

As full of triumph and delight as though that prize were
thine.

Yes ! all is vain ! I want not Wit, I want not Learning's
power,

I want THY hand, I want THY smile to pass the cheerless
hour ;

I want thy earnest, honest voice, whose comfort never fail'd ;
I want thy kindly glance, whose light no coldness ever
 veil'd ;

I feel at every turn of life thy loss hath left me lone,
And I mourn the friend of boyhood's years, the friend for
 ever gone !

TO FERDINAND SEYMOUR.

Rosy child, with forehead fair,
Coral lip, and shining hair,
In whose mirthful, clever eyes
Such a world of gladness lies ;
As thy loose curls idly straying
O'er thy mother's cheek, while playing,
Blend her soft lock's shadowy twine
With the glittering light of thine,—
Who shall say, who gazes now,
Which is fairest, she or thou ?

In sweet contrast are ye met,
Such as heart could ne'er forget :
Thou art brilliant as a flower,
Crimsoning in the sunny hour ;
Merry as a singing-bird,
In the green wood sweetly heard ;

Restless as if fluttering wings
Bore thee on thy wanderings ;
Ignorant of all distress,
Full of childhood's carelessness.

She is gentle ; she hath known
Something of the echoed tone
Sorrow leaves, where'er it goes,
In this world of many woes.
On her brow such shadows are
As the faint cloud gives the star,
Veiling its most holy light,
Tho' it still be pure and bright ;
And the colour in her cheek
To the hue on thine is weak,
Save when flush'd with sweet surprise,
Sudden welcomes light her eyes ;
And her softly chisel'd face
(But for living, moving grace)
Looks like one of those which beam
In th' Italian painter's dream,—
Some beloved Madonna, bending
O'er the infant she is tending ;

Holy, bright, and undefiled
Mother of the Heaven-born child ;
Who, tho' painted strangely fair,
Seems but made for holy prayer,
Pity, tears, and sweet appeal,
And fondness such as angels feel ;
Baffling earthly passion's sigh
With serenest majesty !

Oh ! may those enshrouded years
Whose fair dawn alone appears,—
May that brightly budding life,
Knowing yet nor sin nor strife,—
Bring its store of hoped-for joy,
Mother, to thy laughing boy !
And the good thou dost impart
Lie deep-treasured in his heart,
That, when he at length shall strive
In the bad world where we live,
THY sweet name may still be blest
As one who taught his soul true rest !

THE WINTER'S WALK.

[Written after walking with Mr. Rogers.]

MARK'D—as the hours should be, Fate bids us spend
With one illustrious, or a cherish'd friend—
Rich in the value of that double claim,
Since Fame allots the friend a Poet's name,—
My “ Winter's Walk ” asserts its right to live
Amongst the brightest thoughts my life can give,
And leaves a track of light on Memory's way
Which oft shall gild the future Summer's day.

Gleam'd the red sun athwart the misty haze
Which veil'd the cold earth from its loving gaze,
Feeble and sad as Hope in Sorrow's hour,—
But for THY soul it still had warmth and power ;
Not to its cheerless beauty wert thou blind,
To the keen eye of thy poetic mind

Beauty still lives, tho' nature's flow'rets die,
And wintry sunsets fade along the sky !
And nought escaped thee as we stroll'd along,
Nor changeful ray, nor bird's faint chirping song ;
Bless'd with a fancy easily inspired,
All was beheld, and nothing unadmired ;
From the dim city to the clouded plain,
Not one of all God's blessings giv'n in vain.

And many an anecdote of other times,—
Good earnest deeds,—quaint wit,—and polished rhymes,—
Many a sweet story of remembered years
Which thrilled the listening heart with unshed tears,—
Unweariedly thy willing tongue rehearsed,
And made the hour seem brief as we conversed.

Ah ! who can e'er forget, who once hath heard,
The gentle charm that dwells in every word
Of thy calm converse ? In its kind allied
To some fair river's bright abundant tide,
Whose silver gushing current onward goes,
Fluent and varying ; yet with such repose

As smiles even through the flashings of thy wit,
In every eddy that doth ruffle it.
Who can forget, who at thy social board
Hath sat,—and seen the pictures richly stored,
In all their tints of glory and of gloom,
Brightening the precincts of thy quiet room ;
With busts and statues full of that deep grace
Which modern hands have lost the skill to trace,
(Fragments of beauty—perfect as thy song
On that sweet land to which they did belong,)
Th' exact and classic taste by thee displayed ;
Not with a rich man's idle fond parade,
Not with the pomp of some vain connoisseur
Proud of his bargains, of his judgment sure,
But with the feelings kind and sad, of one
Who thro' far countries wandering hath gone,
And brought away dear keepsakes, to remind
His heart and home of all he left behind.

But wherefore these, in feeble rhyme recal ?
Thy taste, thy wit, thy verse, are known to all ;
Such things are for the World, and therefore doth
The World speak of them ; loud, and nothing loth

To fancy that the talent stamped by Heaven
Is nought unless their echoed praise be given,
A worthless ore not yet allowed to shine,
A diamond darkly buried in its mine.
These are thy daylight qualities, whereon
Beams the full lustre of their garish sun,
And the keen point of many a famed reply
Is what they would not "willingly let die."
But by a holier light thy angel reads
The unseen records of more gentle deeds,—
And by a holier light thy angel sees
The tear oft shed for humble miseries,—
The alms dropp'd gently in the beggar's hand,
(Who in his daily poverty doth stand
Watching for kindness on thy pale calm brow,
Ignorant to whom he breathes his grateful vow).
Th' indulgent hour of kindness stol'n away
From the free leisure of thy well-spent day,
For some poor struggling Son of Genius, bent
Under the weight of heart-sick discontent ;
Whose prayer thou hearest, mindful of the schemes
Of thine own youth ;—the hopes, the fever-dreams
Of Fame and Glory which seemed hovering then,
(Nor only *seemed*) upon thy magic pen ;

And measuring not how much beneath thine own
Is the sick mind thus pining to be known,
But only what a wealth of hope lies hushed
As in a grave,—when men like these are crushed!

And by that light's soft radiance *I* review
Thy unpretending kindness, calm and true,
Not to me only,—but in bitterest hours
To one whom Heaven endowed with varied powers ;
To one who died, e'er yet my childish heart
Knew what Fame meant, or Slander's fabled dart !
Then was the laurel green upon his brow,
And they could flatter then, who judge him now ;
Who, when the fickle breath of fortune changed,
With equal falsehood held their love estranged ;
Nay, like mean wolves, from whelp-hood vainly nurst,
Tore at the easy hand that fed them first.
Not so didst THOU the ties of friendship break—
Not so didst THOU the saddened man forsake ;
And when at length he laid his dying head
On the hard rest of his neglected bed,
He found,—(tho' few or none around him came
Whom he had toiled for in his hour of Fame ;—

Though by his Prince, unroyally forgot,
And left to struggle with his altered lot ;—)
By sorrow weakened,—by disease unnerved,—
Faithful at least the friend he had *not* served :
For the same voice essayed that hour to cheer,
Which now sounds welcome to his grandchild's ear ;
And the same hand, to aid that Life's decline,
Whose gentle clasp so late was linked in mine !

THE REPRIEVE.

[Suggested by a beautiful little Picture painted by J. R. Herbert, Esq., representing, in the foreground, a Woman pleading with a Warrior, and, in the background, preparations for an Execution.]

A MOMENT since, he stood unmoved—alone,
Courage and thought on his resolv'd brow ;
But hope is quivering in the broken tone,
Whose bitter anguish seems to shake him now :
Her light foot woke no echo as it came,
The rustling robe her sudden swiftness told ;
She pleads for one who dies a death of shame ;
She pleads—for agony and love are bold.

“ Oh ! hear me, thou, who in the sunshine's glare
So calmly waitest till the warning bell
Shall of the closing hour of *his* despair
In gloomy notes of muffled triumph tell :

Let him not die! Avenging Heaven is just ;
Thine, a like fate in after years may be :
Thy forfeit head may gasping bite the dust,
While those *thou* lovest, plead in vain for thee !
Thou smilest sternly : thou could'st well brave death ?
Hast braved it often on the tented field ?
So fought *my* hero on th' ensanguined heath,
With desperate strength, that knew not how to yield :
But oh! the death whose punctual hour is set,
And waited for mid lingering thoughts of pain ;
Where no excitement bids the heart forget,
And skill and courage are alike in vain ;
Who shall find strength for *that*?—Oh! man, to whom
Fate, chance, or what thou wilt, hath given this hour—
Upon whose will depends his dreaded doom—
Doth it not awe thee, thinking of thy power?
In the wide battle's hot and furious rage,
Where the mix'd banners flutter to and fro,
Where all alike the desperate combat wage,
One of a thousand swords may pierce him through :
But, now, *his life is in thy single hand* :
To thee the strange and startling power is given—
And thou shalt answer for this day's command
When ye stand face to face in God's own Heaven.

Bear with me! pardon me this sudden start!

My words are bitter, for my heart is sore;

And oh! dark soldier of the iron heart,

Fain would I learn the speech should touch thee more!

He hath a mother—age hath dimm'd her sight—

But when his quick returning step comes nigh,

She smiles, as though she saw a sudden light,

And turns to bless him with a stifled sigh.

When to *her* arms a lonely wretch I go,

And she doth ask for him, the true and brave,

While on her cheek faint smiles of welcome glow,

How shall I answer 'he is in the grave!'

He hath a little son—a mirthful boy,

Whose coral lips with ready smiles are curl'd;

Wilt thou quench all the spring-time of his joy,

And leave him orphan in a friendless world?

Hast *thou* no children?—Do no visions come,

When the low night-wind through the poplar grieves—

Echoes of farewell voices—sounds of home—

For which thy busy day no leisure leaves?

Some one doth love thee—some one thou dost love—

(For such the blessed lot of all on earth,)

Some one to whom thy thoughts oft fondly rove,

The sharer of thy sorrows and thy mirth;

Who with dim weeping eyes, and thoughts that burn,
Sees thy proud form lead forth th' embattled host ;

To whom 'a victory' speaks of *thy* return—
And 'a defeat' means only *thou* art lost!

If such there be, (and on thy helm-worn brow
Sternness, not cruelty, doth seem to reign,)

Think it is she, who kneels before thee now,
Her heart which bursts with agony of pain.

“Hark!——’T is the warning stroke—his hour is come—
I hear the bell slow clanging on the air—

I hear the beating of the muffled drum—
Thou hast a moment yet to save and spare !

Oh! when returning to thy native land,
Greeted with grateful tears and loud acclaim ;

While gazing on thy homeward march they stand,
And smiling children shout thy welcome name :

How wilt thou bear the joyous village chimes,
Whose ringing peals remind thee of to-day—

Will not my image haunt thee at those times ?
And my hoarse desperate voice seem yet to pray ?

When thy long term of bloody toil is past,
And the hush'd trumpet calls no more to arms—

Will not *his* death thy tranquil brow o'ercast,
And rob that peaceful hour of half its charms ?

When thy child's mother bends thy lip to press,
And her true hand lies clasp'd within thine own—

Will her low voice have perfect power to bless,
Remembering *me*, the widow'd and the lone?

When they embrace thee—when they welcome thee——
By all my hopes of Heaven, thy brow relents!

Oh! sign the paper—let his life go free—
Give it me quick!"—

“What ho! Raise her—the woman faints!”

THE FAITHFUL GUARDIAN.

[Suggested by Mr. Edwin Landseer's celebrated Picture of the Marquis of Abercorn's Children.]

Two beautiful and rosy babes are pictured here alone,
Two infants of a noble race, as any near the throne:—
And, in the cradle's shadow, lies a stately-looking hound,
His fine limbs full of strength and grace, couched humbly
on the ground :

Humbly upon the ground lies *he* : while from the young
child's arm

A jealous spaniel snarling peeps, whom no caress can charm ;
Though close that dimpled arm is bent, as though its clasp
would fain

Its spoiled companion's idle wrath to gentleness restrain ;

Small need of care! The stately hound, still calm and
couchant lies,
With lazy kindness lifting up his wise and honest eyes;
Declaring by the emblem meet of his serene repose,
How frankly generous hearts can bear the baiting of mean
foes.

Not so, O! noble-natured brute, would'st thou quiescent
rest,
If the sound of danger roused the blood within thy valiant
breast;
If near these helpless little fays,—thy master's children—
came
The doubtful tread of stranger's feet, on whom they had no
claim;

Then, *then*, upspringing with a bound,—aroused for their
defence,—
Each nerve would arm with savage strength thy keen and
eager sense,
And the darkly gleaming eyes where now such softened
shadows play,
Would burn like watch-fires, lit at night, to scare the foe
away.

And were the danger *real* to these, by whom thy watch is
kept,—

E'er a rough hand should dare profane the cradle where
they slept,

E'er a rude step should reach the spot where now they
smile at play,—

Thy fangs would meet within his throat, to hold the wretch
at bay!

Thou would'st battle, noble creature, for these children of
thy lord's,

As *men* fight for a Royal Prince, whose crown hangs on
their swords;—

Soldiers, who hear their General's cry, by treachery hemm'd
in,—

Freemen, who strike for home and hearth, 'gainst Tyranny's
proud sin,—

So would'st thou strive! And bold were he who then could
lay thee low,

For still thy fierce and mighty grasp would pin the strug-
gling foe,

And if keen sword, or human skill, cut short thy gasping
breath,

Should *he* be thought thy conqueror?—No!—*Thy* conqueror
would be Death.

Oh, tried and trusted! Thou whose love ne'er changes nor
forsakes,

Thou proof how perfect God hath stamped the meanest
thing he makes ;

Thou, whom no snare entraps to serve, no art is used to
tame,—

(Train'd, like ourselves, thy path to know, by words of
love and blame;)

Friend! who beside the cottage door, or in the rich man's
hall,

With steadfast faith still answerest the one familiar call,—

Well by poor hearth and lordly home thy couchant form
may rest,

And Prince and Peasant trust thee still, to guard what they
love best!

THE FORSAKEN.

[Suggested by an Italian picture, of a dying girl, to whom the lute is being played.]

I.

It is the music of her native land,—
The airs she used to love in happier days ;
The lute is struck by some young gentle hand,
To soothe her spirit with remember'd lays.

II.

But her sad heart is wandering from the notes,
Her ear is fill'd with an imagined strain ;
Vainly the soften'd music round her floats,
The echo it awakes is all of pain !

III.

The echo it awakes, is of a voice
Which never more her weary heart shall cheer ;
Fain would she banish it, but hath no choice,
Its vanish'd sound still haunts her shrinking ear,—

IV.

Still haunts her with its tones of joy and love,
Its memories of bitterness and wrong,
Bidding her thoughts thro' various changes rove,—
Welcomes, farewells, and snatches of wild song.

V.

Why bring her music? She had half forgot
How left, how lonely, how oppress'd she was ;
Why, by these strains, recal her former lot,
The depth of all her suffering, and its cause ?

VI.

Know ye not what a spell there is in sound ?
Know ye not that the melody of *words*
Is nothing to the power that wanders round,
Giving vague language to harmonious chords ?

VII.

Oh ! keep ye silence ! *He* hath sung to her,
And from that hour—(faint twilight, sweet and dim,
When the low breeze scarce made the branches stir)—
Music hath been a memory of HIM !

VIII.

Chords which the wandering fingers scarcely touch
When they would seek for some forgotten song,—
Stray notes which have no certain meaning, such
As careless hands unthinkingly prolong,—

IX.

Come unto HER, fraught with a vivid dream
Of love, in all its wild and passionate strength,—
Of sunsets, glittering on the purple stream,—
Of shadows, deepening into twilight length,—

X.

Of gentle sounds, when the warm world lay hush'd
Beneath the soft breath of the evening air,—
Of hopes and fears, and expectations crush'd,
By one long certainty of blank despair!

XI.

Bear to the sick man's couch the fiery cup,
Pledged by wild feasters in their riotous hours,
And bid his parch'd lips drink the poison up,
As tho' its foam held cool refresh'ing powers,—

XII.

Lift some poor wounded wretch, whose writhing pain
Finds soothing only in an utter rest,
Forth in some rude-made litter, to regain
Strength for his limbs and vigour for his breast ;—

XIII.

But soothe ye not that proud forsaken heart
With strains whose sweetness maddens as they fall ;
Untroubled let her feverish soul depart—
Not long shall memory's power its might enthrall ;

XIV.

Not long,—tho' balmy be the summer's breath !
In the deep stillness of its golden light,
A shadowy spirit sits, whose name is DEATH,
And turns, what was all beauty, into blight ;

XV.

And she, before whose sad and dreaming eye
Visions of by-gone days are sweeping on,
In her unfaded youth shall drooping die,
Shut from the glow of that Italian sun :

XVI.

Then let the organ's solemn notes prolong
Their glory round the silence of her grave,
Then let the choral voices swell in song
And echo thro' the chancel and the nave ;

XVII.

For then her heart shall ache not at the sound,
Then the faint fever of her life shall cease ;
Silence, unbroken, calm, shall reign around,
And the long restless shall be laid at peace.

THE VISIONARY PORTRAIT.

I.

As by his lonely hearth he sate,
The shadow of a welcome dream
Pass'd o'er his heart,—disconsolate
His home did seem ;
Comfort in vain was spread around,
For something still was wanting found.

II.

Therefore he thought of one who might
For ever in his presence stay ;
Whose dream should be of him by night,
Whose smile should be for him by day ;
And the sweet vision, vague and far,
Rose on his fancy like a star.

III.

“ Let her be young, yet not a child,
Whose light and inexperienced mirth
Is all too wingéd and too wild
For sober earth,—
Too rainbow-like such mirth appears,
And fades away in misty tears.

IV.

“ Let youth’s fresh rose still gently bloom
Upon her smooth and downy cheek,
Yet let a shadow, not of gloom,
But soft and meek,
Tell that *some* sorrow she hath known,
Tho’ not a sorrow of her own.

V.

“ And let her eyes be of the grey,
The soft grey of the brooding dove,
Full of the sweet and tender ray
Of modest love ;
For fonder shows that dreamy hue
Than lustrous black or heavenly blue.

VI.

“ Let her be full of quiet grace,
 No sparkling wit with sudden glow
Bright’ning her purely chisell’d face
 And placid brow ;
Not radiant to the *stranger’s* eye,—
A creature easily pass’d by;

VII.

“ But who, once seen, with untold power
 For ever haunts the yearning heart,
Raised from the crowd that self-same hour
 To dwell apart,
All sainted and enshrined to be
The idol of our memory!

VIII.

“ And oh ! let Mary be her name—
 It hath a sweet and gentle sound
At which no glories dear to fame
 Come crowding round,
But which the dreaming heart beguiles
With holy thoughts and household smiles.

IX.

“ With peaceful meetings, welcomes kind,
And love, the same in joy and tears,
And gushing intercourse of mind
Thro’ faithful years ;
Oh! dream of something half divine,
Be real—be mortal—and be mine !”

THE PICTURE OF SAPPHO.

I.

THOU! whose impassion'd face
The Painter loves to trace,
Theme of the Sculptor's art and Poet's story—
How many a wand'ring thought
Thy loveliness hath brought,
Warming the heart with its imagined glory!

II.

Yet, was it History's truth,
That tale of wasted youth,
Of endless grief, and Love forsaken pining?
What wert thou, thou whose woe
The old traditions show
With Fame's cold light around thee vainly shining?

III.

Didst thou indeed sit there

In languid lone despair—

Thy harp neglected by thee idly lying—

Thy soft and earnest gaze

Watching the lingering rays

In the far west, where summer-day was dying—

IV.

While with low rustling wings,

Among the quivering strings

The murmuring breeze faint melody was making,

As though it wooed thy hand

To strike with new command,

Or mourn'd with thee because thy heart was breaking?

V.

Didst thou, as day by day

Roll'd heavily away,

And left thee anxious, nerveless, and dejected,

Wandering thro' bowers beloved—

Roving where *he* had roved—

Yearn for his presence, as for one expected?

VI.

Didst thou, with fond wild eyes
Fix'd on the starry skies,
Wait feverishly for each new day to waken—
Trusting some glorious morn
Might witness his return,
Unwilling to believe thyself forsaken?

VII.

And when conviction came,
Chilling that heart of flame,
Didst thou, O saddest of earth's grieving daughters!
From the Leucadian steep
Dash, with a desperate leap,
And hide thyself within the whelming waters?

VIII.

Yea, in their hollow breast
Thy heart at length found rest!
The ever-moving waves above thee closing—
The winds, whose ruffling sigh
Swept the blue waters by,
Disturb'd thee not!—thou wert in peace reposing!

IX.

Such is the tale they tell !

Vain was thy beauty's spell—

Vain all the praise thy song could still inspire—

Though many a happy band

Rung with less skilful hand

The borrowed love-notes of thy echoing lyre.

X.

FAME, to thy breaking heart

No comfort could impart,

In vain thy brow the laurel wreath was wearing ;

One grief and one alone

Could bow thy bright head down—

Thou wert a WOMAN, and wert left despairing !

THE SENSE OF BEAUTY.

SPIRIT! who over this our mortal Earth,
Where nought hath birth
Which imperfection doth not some way dim,
Since Earth offended HIM—
Thou who unseen, from out thy radiant wings
Dost shower down light o'er mean and common things ;
And, wandering to and fro,
Through the condemn'd and sinful world dost go,
Haunting that wilderness, the human heart,
With gleams of glory that too soon depart,
Gilding both weed and flower ;—
What is thy birth divine ? and whence thy mighty power ?

The Sculptor owns thee ! On his high pale brow
Bewild'ring images are pressing now ;
Groups whose immortal grace
His chisel ne'er shall trace,

Though in his mind the fresh creation glows ;
High forms of godlike strength,
Or limbs whose languid length
The marble fixes in a sweet repose!
At thy command,
His true and patient hand
Moulds the dull clay to Beauty's richest line,
Or with more tedious skill,
Obedient to thy will,
By touches imperceptible and fine,
Works slowly day by day
The rough-hewn block away,
Till the soft shadow of the bust's pale smile
Wakes into *statue-life* and pays the assiduous toil !

Thee, the young Painter knows,—whose fervent eyes,
O'er the blank waste of canvas fondly bending,
See fast within its magic circle rise
Some pictured scene, with colours softly blending,—
Green bowers and leafy glades,
The old Arcadian shades,
Where thwarting glimpses of the sun are thrown,
And dancing nymphs and shepherds one by one

Appear to bless his sight
In Fancy's glowing light,
Peopling that spot of green Earth's flowery breast
With every attitude of joy and rest.

Lo! at his pencil's touch steals faintly forth
(Like an uprising star in the cold north)
Some face which soon shall glow with beauty's fire:
Dim seems the sketch to those who stand around,
Dim and uncertain as an echoed sound,
But oh! how bright to him, whose hand *thou* dost inspire!

Thee, also, doth the dreaming Poet hail,
Fond comforter of many a dreary day—
When through the clouds his Fancy's car can sail
To worlds of radiance far, *how* far, away!
At thy clear touch (as at the burst of light
Which Morning shoots along the purple hills,
Chasing the shadows of the vanish'd night,
And silvering all the darkly gushing rills,
Giving each waking blossom, gemm'd with dew,
Its bright and proper hue ;)—
He suddenly beholds the chequered face
Of this old world in its young Eden grace!

Disease, and want, and sin, and pain, are not—
Nor homely and familiar things:—man's lot
Is like his aspirations—bright and high;
And even the haunting thought that man must die,
His dream so changes from its fearful strife,
Death seems but fainting into purer life!

Nor only these thy presence woo,
The less inspired own thee too!
Thou hast thy tranquil source
In the deep well-springs of the human heart,
And gushest with sweet force
When most imprison'd; causing tears to start
In the worn citizen's o'erwearied eye,
As, with a sigh,
At the bright close of some rare holiday,
He sees the branches wave, the waters play—
And hears the clock's far distant mellow chime
Warn him a busier world reclaims his time!

Thee, Childhood's heart confesses,—when he sees
The heavy rose-bud crimson in the breeze,

When the red coral wins his eager gaze,
Or the warm sunbeam dazzles with its rays.
Thee, through his varied hours of rapid joy,
The eager Boy,—
Who wild across the grassy meadow springs,
And still with sparkling eyes
Pursues the uncertain prize,
Lured by the velvet glory of its wings !

And so from youth to age—yea, till the end—
An unforsaking, unforgetting friend,
Thou hoverest round us! And when all is o'er,
And Earth's most loved illusions please no more,
Thou stealest gently to the couch of Death ;
There, while the lagging breath
Comes faint and fitfully, to usher nigh
Consoling visions from thy native sky,
Making it sweet to die !
The sick man's ears are faint—his eyes are dim—
But his heart listens to the Heavenward hymn,
And his soul sees—in lieu of that sad band,
Who come with mournful tread
To kneel about his bed,—
God's white-robed angels, who around him stand,
And waive his Spirit to "the Better Land!"

So, living,—dying,—still our hearts pursue
That loveliness which never met our view;
Still to the last the ruling thought will reign,
Nor deem one feeling given—was giv'n *in vain!*
For it may be, our banish'd souls recal
In this, their earthly thrall,
(With the sick dreams of exiles,) that far world
Whence angels once were hurl'd;
Or it may be, a faint and trembling sense,
Vague, as permitted by Omnipotence,
Foreshows the immortal radiance round us shed,
When the Imperfect shall be perfected!
Like the chain'd eagle in his fetter'd might,
Straining upon the Heavens his wistful sight,
Who toward the upward glory fondly springs
With all the vain strength of his shivering wings,—
So chain'd to earth, and baffled—yet so fond
Of the pure sky which lies so far beyond,
We make *the attempt to soar* in many a thought
Of Beauty born, and into Beauty wrought;
Dimly we struggle onwards:—who shall say
Which glimmering light leads nearest to the Day?

THE MOTHER'S HEART.

I.

WHEN first thou camest, gentle, shy, and fond,
My eldest-born, first hope, and dearest treasure,
My heart received thee with a joy beyond
All that it yet had felt of earthly pleasure ;
Nor thought that *any* love again might be
So deep and strong as that I felt for thee.

II.

Faithful and true, with sense beyond thy years,
And natural piety that lean'd to Heaven ;
Wrung by a harsh word suddenly to tears,
Yet patient of rebuke when justly given—
Obedient—easy to be reconciled—
And meekly-cheerful—such wert thou, my child !

III.

Not willing to be left ; still by my side
Haunting my walks, while summer-day was dying ;—
Nor leaving in thy turn ; but pleased to glide
Thro' the dark room where I was sadly lying,
Or by the couch of pain, a sitter meek,
Watch the dim eye, and kiss the feverish cheek.

IV.

O boy! of such as thou are oftenest made
Earth's fragile idols ; like a tender flower,
No strength in all thy freshness,—prone to fade,—
And bending weakly to the thunder-shower,—
Still, round the loved, thy heart found force to bind,
And clung, like woodbine shaken in the wind!

V.

Then THOU, my merry love ;—bold in thy glee,
Under the bough, or by the firelight dancing,
With thy sweet temper, and thy spirit free,
Didst come, as restless as a bird's wing glancing,
Full of a wild and irrepressible mirth,
Like a young sunbeam to the gladden'd earth!

VI.

Thine was the shout! the song! the burst of joy!
Which sweet from childhood's rosy lip resoundeth;
Thine was the eager spirit nought could cloy,
And the glad heart from which all grief reboundeth;
And many a mirthful jest and mock reply,
Lurk'd in the laughter of thy dark-blue eye!

VII.

And thine was many an art to win and bless,
The cold and stern to joy and fondness warming;
The coaxing smile;—the frequent soft caress;—
The earnest tearful prayer all wrath disarming!
Again my heart a new affection found,
But thought that love with *thee* had reach'd its bound.

VIII.

At length THOU camest; thou, the last and least;
Nick-named "The Emperor" by thy laughing brothers,
Because a haughty spirit swell'd thy breast,
And thou didst seek to rule and sway the others;
Mingling with every playful infant wile
A mimic majesty that made us smile:—

IX.

And oh! most like a regal child wert thou!
An eye of resolute and successful scheming!
Fair shoulders—curling lip—and dauntless brow—
Fit for the world's strife, not for Poet's dreaming:
And proud the lifting of thy stately head,
And the firm bearing of thy conscious tread.

X.

Different from both! Yet each succeeding claim,
I, that all other love had been forswearing,
Forthwith admitted, equal and the same;
Nor injured either, by this love's comparing,
Nor stole a fraction for the newer call—
But in the Mother's Heart, found room for ALL!

MAY-DAY, 1837.

I.

MAY-DAY is come!—While yet the unwilling Spring
Checks with capricious frown the opening year,
Onward, where bleak winds have been whispering,
The punctual Hours their ancient playmate bear;
But those who long have look'd for thee, stand by,
Like men who welcome back a friend bereaved,
And cannot smile, because his sadden'd eye
Doth mutely tell them how his soul is grieved.
Even thus *we* greet thine alter'd face to-day,
Thou friend in mourning garb!—chill, melancholy
May!

II.

To thee the first and readiest smiles of Earth,
 Lovely with life renew'd, were always given,—
 To thee belong'd the sunshine and the mirth
 Which bathed all Nature with a glow from Heaven,—
 To thee the joy of Childhood's earnest heart,
 His shouting song, and light elastic tread,
 His brows high arch'd, and laughing lips apart,
 Bright as the wreath that bound his rosy head :—
 Thou wert of Innocence the holiday,
 Thou garlanded and glad!—thou ever-blooming May!

III.

Yet will I not reproach thee for thy change :
 Closed be the flower, and leafless be the tree !
 Smile not as thou wert wont ; but sad, and strange,
 And joyless, let thy tardy coming be !
 So shall I miss those infant voices less,
 Calling each other through the garden bowers,
 Meeting and parting in wild happiness,
 Leading a light dance thro' the sunny hours ;
 Those little mirthful hearts, who, far away,
 Breathe, amid cloud-capp'd hills, a yet more wintry
 May!

IV.

Ah, boys ! your play-ground is a desert spot,
 Revisited alone, and bathed with tears ;
 And where *ye* pass your May-day, knoweth not
 The mother who hath watch'd your dawning years.
 Mine is no more the joy to see ye come,
 And deem each step hath some peculiar grace !
 Yours is no more the mother's welcome home,
 Smiling at each beloved, familiar face !
 And I am thankful that this dreary May
 Recals not, save by name, that brighter, happier day !

V.

I should have felt more mock'd, if there had been
 More peace and sunshine round me,—had the grove,
 Clad in transparent leaves of tender green,
 Been full of murm'ring sounds of Nature's love ;
 I should have wept more bitterly beneath
 The frail laburnum trees, so faint and fair,—
 I should have sicken'd at the lilac's breath,
 Thrown by the warm sun on the silent air ;
 But now, with stern regret I wend my way—
 I know thee not,—thou cold, and unfamiliar May !

THE FEVER-DREAM.

It was a fever-dream ; I lay
Awake, as in the broad bright day,
But faint and worn I drew my breath
Like those who wait for coming death ;
And my hand lay helpless on my pillow
Weak as a reed or bending willow ;
And the night-lamp, with its shadowy veil,
And its light so sickly, faint, and pale,
Gleamed mournfully on objects round ;
And the clock's stroke was the only sound ;
Measuring the hours of silent time
With a heavy and unwelcome chime,
As still monotonously true
To its pulse-like beat, the minutes flew.

I was alone, but not asleep ;
Too weary, and too weak to weep,

My eyes had closed in sadness there ;
And they who watched o'er my despair
Had placed that dim light in the room,
And deepened the surrounding gloom,
By curtaining out the few sad rays
Which made things present to my gaze ;
And all because they vainly thought
At last the night its rest had brought,—
Alas! rest came no more to me
So heavy was my misery!

They left me, and my heart was filled
With wandering dreams, whose fancies thrilled
Painfully through my feeble brain,
Till I almost wished them back again.
Yet wherefore should I bid them stay?
They could not chase those dreams away,
But only watch me as I lay.

They left me, and the midnight stroke
From the old clock the silence broke ;

And with a wild repining sigh
I wished it were my time to die !
And then, with spirit all dismayed,
For that wild wish, forgiveness prayed,
Humbling myself to God's high power
To bear His will, and wait His hour.

And while I darkly rested there,
The breath of a young child's floating hair,
Perfumed, and warm, and glistening bright,
Swept past me in the shrouding night ;—
And the footsteps of children, light and quick,
(While my heart beat loud, and my breath came thick)
Went to and fro on the silent floor ;—
And the lock was turned in the fastened door,
As a child may turn it, who tiptoe stands
With his fair round arms and his dimpled hands,
Putting out all their strength in vain
Admittance by his own means to gain :
Till his sweet impatient voice is heard
Like the chirp of a young imprisoned bird,
Seeking an entrance still to win
By fond petitions to those within.

A child's soft shadowy hair, bright smiles,
His merry laugh, and coaxing wiles,
These are sweet things,—most precious things,—
But in spite of my brain's wild wanderings,
I knew that they dwelt in my fancy only,
And that I was sad, and left, and lonely ;
And the fear of a dreadful madness came
And withered my soul like a parching flame ;
And I felt the strong delirium growing,
And the thread of my feeble senses going,
And I heard with a horror all untold
Which turned my hot blood icy-cold,
Those light steps draw more near my bed ;
And by visions I was visited,
Of the gentle eyes which I might not see,
And the faces that were so far from me !

And blest, oh ! blest was the morning beam
Which woke me up from my fever-dream !

TO THE LADY H. O.

[Isle of Wight, September, 1838.]

I.

COME o'er the green hills to the sunny sea!
The boundless sea that washeth many lands,
Where shells unknown to England, fair and free,
Lie brightly scatter'd on the gleaming sands.
There, 'midst the hush of slumbering ocean's roar,
We'll sit and watch the silver-tissued waves
Creep languidly along the basking shore,
And kiss thy gentle feet, like Eastern slaves.

II.

And we will take some volume of our choice,
Full of a quiet poetry of thought,
And thou shalt read me, with thy plaintive voice,
Lines which some gifted mind hath sweetly wrought;

And I will listen, gazing on thy face,
 (Pale as some cameo on the Italian shell!)
Or looking out across the far blue space,
 Where glancing sails to gentle breezes swell.

III.

Come forth! The sun hath flung on Thetis' breast
 The glittering tresses of his golden hair;
All things are heavy with a noonday rest,
 And floating sea-birds leave the stirless air.
Against the sky, in outlines clear and rude,
 The cleft rocks stand, while sunbeams slant between;
And lulling winds are murmuring thro' the wood,
 Which skirts the bright bay with its fringe of green.

IV.

Come forth! All motion is so gentle now,
 It seems *thy* step alone should walk the earth,—
Thy voice alone, the “ever soft and low,”
 Wake the far-haunting echoes into birth.
Too wild would be Love's passionate store of hope,
 Unmeet the influence of his changeful power,—
Ours be companionship, whose gentle scope
 Hath charm enough for such a tranquil hour.

V.

And slowly, idly wandering, we will roam,
Where the high cliffs shall give us ample shade ;
And watch the glassy waves, whose wrathful foam
Hath power to make the seaman's heart afraid.
Seek thou no veil to shroud thy soft brown hair,—
Wrap thou no mantle round thy graceful form ;
The cloudless sky smiles forth as still and fair
As tho' earth ne'er could know another storm.

VI.

Come ! Let not listless sadness make delay,—
Beneath Heaven's light that sadness will depart ;
And as we wander on our shoreward way,
A strange, sweet peace shall enter in thine heart.
We will not weep, nor talk of vanish'd years,
When, link by link, Hope's glittering chain was riven :
Those who are dead, shall claim from love no tears,—
Those who have injured us, shall be forgiven.

VII.

Few have my summers been, and fewer thine ;—
Youth blighted is the weary lot of both :
To both, all lonely shows our life's decline,
Both with old friends and ties have waxed wroth.

But yet we will not weep ! The breathless calm
Which lulls the golden earth, and wide blue sea,
Shall pour into our souls mysterious balm,
And fill us with its own tranquillity.

VIII.

We will not mar the scene—we will not look
To the veil'd future, or the shadowy past ;
Seal'd up shall be sad Memory's open book,
And childhood's idleness return at last !
Joy, with his restless, ever-fluttering wings,
And Hope, his gentle brother,—all shall cease :
Like weary hinds that seek the desert springs,
Our one sole feeling shall be peace—deep peace !

THE FALLEN LEAVES.

I.

WE stand among the fallen leaves,
Young children at our play,
And laugh to see the yellow things
Go rustling on their way :
Right merrily we hunt them down,
The autumn winds and we,
Nor pause to gaze where snow-drifts lie,
Or sunbeams gild the tree :
With dancing feet we leap along
Where wither'd boughs are strown ;
Nor past nor future checks our song—
The present is our own.

II.

We stand among the fallen leaves
 In youth's enchanted spring—
When Hope (who wearies at the last)
 First spreads her eagle wing.
We tread with steps of conscious strength
 Beneath the leafless trees,
And the colour kindles on our cheek
 As blows the winter breeze ;
While, gazing towards the cold grey sky,
 Clouded with snow and rain,
We wish the old year all past by,
 And the young spring come again.

III.

We stand among the fallen leaves
 In manhood's haughty prime—
When first our pausing hearts begin
 To love " the olden time ;"
And, as we gaze, we sigh to think
 How many a year hath pass'd
Since 'neath those cold and faded trees
 Our footsteps wander'd last ;

And old companions—now perchance
Estranged, forgot, or dead—
Come round us, as those autumn leaves
Are crush'd beneath our tread.

IV.

We stand among the fallen leaves
In our *own* autumn day—
And, tott'ring on with feeble steps,
Pursue our cheerless way.
We look not back—too long ago
Hath all we loved been lost ;
Nor forward—for we may not live
To see our new hope cross'd :
But on we go—the sun's faint beam
A feeble warmth imparts—
Childhood without its joy returns—
The present fills our hearts !

THE AUTUMN WIND.

I.

HUSH, moaning autumn wind! be still, be still!
Thy grieving voice forbiddeth hearts to rest;
We hear thee sweeping down the lonely hill,
And mournful thoughts crowd o'er the human breast.
Why wilt thou haunt us, with thy voice unkind,
Sadd'ning the earth? Hush, moaning autumn wind!

II.

Toss not the branching trees so wildly high,
Filling the forest with thy dreary sound:
Without *thy* aid the hues of summer die,
And the sear leaves fall scatter'd to the ground.
Thou dost but hasten, needlessly unkind,
The winter's task, thou moaning autumn wind!

III.

Sweep not thro' Ocean's caves with hollow roar,
Driving our fair ships to some rock-bound strand!
While the vex'd sea foams wrathful to the shore,
The seaman's wife looks shuddering from the land,
And widow'd hearts for many a year shall find
Death in thy voice, thou moaning autumn wind!

IV.

Round our calm dwellings, when our hearths are gay,
Roam not, oh howling spirit of Despair!
As tho' thou wert a creature seeking prey,
And where the land look'd richest, found it there.
We have enough of memories unkind
Without thy voice, thou moaning autumn wind!

V.

Thee the sad mourner lists, and turns to weep,
In the blank silence of her lonely home;
The sick man hears, and starts from broken sleep,
And the night-wanderer sighs—compell'd to roam;
While the poor shiver, for *their* huts unkind
Bar thee not out, thou searching autumn wind!

VI.

Back to the barren hill and lonely glen!

Here let the wandering of thy echoes cease;

Sadly thou soundest to the hearts of men,—

Hush thy wild voice, and let the earth have peace;

Or, if *no* chain thy restless will can bind,

Sweep thro' the desert, moaning autumn wind!

THE BLIND MAN'S BRIDE.

I.

WHEN first, beloved, in vanish'd hours
The blind man sought thy love to gain,
They said thy cheek was bright as flowers
New freshen'd by the summer rain :
They said thy movements, swift yet soft,
Were such as make the wingéd dove
Seem, as it gently soars aloft,
The image of repose and love.

II.

They told me, too, an eager crowd
Of wooers praised thy beauty rare,
But that thy heart was all too proud
A common love to meet or share.

Ah! thine was neither pride nor scorn,
 But in thy coy and virgin breast
 Dwelt preference, not of PASSION born,
 The love that hath a holier rest!

III.

Days came and went;—thy step I heard
 Pause frequent, as it pass'd me by:—
 Days came and went;—thy heart was stirr'd,
 And answer'd to my stifled sigh!
 And thou didst make a humble choice,
 Content to be the blind man's bride,
 Who loved thee for thy gentle voice,
 And own'd no joy on earth beside.

IV.

And well by that sweet voice I knew
 (Without the happiness of sight)
 Thy years, as yet, were glad and few,—
 Thy smile, most innocently bright:
 I knew how full of love's own grace
 The beauty of thy form must be;
 And fancy idolized the face
 Whose loveliness I might not see!

V.

Oh! happy were those days, beloved!
I almost ceased for light to pine
When thro' the summer vales we roved,
Thy fond hand gently link'd in mine.
Thy soft " Good night " still sweetly cheer'd
The unbroken darkness of my doom ;
And thy " Good morrow, love," endear'd
Each sunrise that return'd in gloom !

VI.

At length, as years roll'd swiftly on,
They spoke to me of Time's decay—
Of roses from thy smooth cheek gone,
And ebon ringlets turn'd to grey.
Ah! then I *blest* the sightless eyes
Which could not feel the deepening shade,
Nor watch beneath succeeding skies
Thy withering beauty faintly fade.

VII.

I saw no paleness on thy cheek,
No lines upon thy forehead smooth,—
But still the BLIND MAN heard thee *speak*
In accents made to bless and soothe :

Still he could feel thy guiding hand
 As thro' the woodlands wild we ranged,—
 Still in the summer light could stand,
 And know thy HEART and VOICE unchanged.

VIII.

And still, beloved, till life grows cold,
 We 'll wander 'neath a genial sky,
 And only know that we are old
 By counting happy years gone by :
 For thou to *me* art still as fair
 As when those happy years began,—
 When first thou cam'st to soothe and share
 The sorrows of a sightless man !

IX.

Old Time, who changes all below,
 To wean men gently for the grave,
 Hath brought us no increase of woe,
 And leaves us all he ever gave :
 For I am still a helpless thing,
 Whose darken'd world is cheer'd by thee—
 And thou art she whose beauty's spring
 The blind man vainly yearn'd to see !

THE WIDOW TO HER SON'S BETROTHED.

I.

АH, cease to plead with that sweet cheerful voice,
Nor bid me struggle with a weight of woe,
Lest from the very tone that says "rejoice"
A double bitterness of grief should grow;
Those words from THEE convey no gladdening thought,
No sound of comfort lingers in their tone,
But by their means a haunting shade is brought
Of love and happiness for ever gone!

II.

My son!—alas, hast thou forgotten *him*,
That thou art full of hopeful plans again?
His heart is cold—his joyous eyes are dim,—
For him THE FUTURE is a word in vain!

He never more the welcome hours may share,
 Nor bid Love's sunshine cheer our lonely home,—
 How hast thou conquer'd all the long despair
 Born of that sentence—*He is in the tomb?*

III.

How can thy hand with cheerful fondness press
 The hands of friends who still on earth may stay—
 Remembering *his* most passionate caress
 When the LONG PARTING summon'd him away?
 How can'st thou keep from bitter weeping, while
 Strange voices tell thee thou art brightly fair—
 Remembering how *he* loved thy playful smile,
 Kiss'd thy smooth cheek, and praised thy burnish'd hair?

IV.

How can'st thou laugh? How can'st thou warble songs?
 How can'st thou lightly tread the meadow-fields,
 Praising the freshness which to spring belongs,
 And the sweet incense which the hedge-flower yields?
 Does not the many-blossom'd spring recal
 Our pleasant walks through cowslip-spangled meads,—
 The violet-scented lanes—the warm south-wall,
 Where early flow'rets rear'd their welcome heads

V.

Does not remembrance darken on thy brow
 When the wild rose a richer fragrance flings—
 When the caressing breezes lift the bough,
 And the sweet thrush more passionately sings;—
 Dost thou not, then, lament for him whose form
 Was ever near thee, full of earnest grace?
 Does not the sudden darkness of the storm
 Seem luridly to fall on Nature's face?

VI.

It does to ME! The murmuring summer breeze,
 Which thou dost turn thy glowing cheek to meet,
 For *me* sweeps desolately through the trees,
 And moans a dying requiem at my feet!
 The glistening river which in beauty glides,
 Sparkling and blue with morn's triumphant light,
 All lonely flows, or in its bosom hides
 A broken image lost to human sight!

VII.

But THOU!—Ah! turn thee not in grief away;
 I do not wish *thy* soul as sadly wrung—
 I know the freedom of thy spirit's play,
 I know thy bounding heart is fresh and young:

I know corroding Time *will* slowly break
 The links which bound most fondly and most fast,
 And Hope *will* be Youth's comforter, and make
 The long bright Future overweigh the Past.

VIII.

Only, when full of tears I raise mine eyes
 And meet *thine* ever full of smiling light,
 I feel as though thy vanish'd sympathies
 Were buried in HIS grave, where all is night;
 And when beside our lonely hearth I sit,
 And thy light laugh comes echoing to my ear,
 I wonder how the waste of mirth and wit
 Hath still the power thy widow'd heart to cheer!

IX.

Bear with me yet! Mine is a harsh complaint!
 And thy youth's innocent lightheartedness
 Should rather soothe me when my spirits faint
 Than seem to mock my age's lone distress.
 But oh! the tide of grief is swelling high,
 And if so soon forgetfulness must be—
 If, for the DEAD, thou hast no further sigh,
 Weep for his Mother!—Weep, young Bride, for ME!

THE TRYST.

I.

I went, alone, to the old familiar place

Where we often met,—

When the twilight soften'd thy bright and radiant face

And the sun had set.

All things around seem'd whispering of the past,

With thine image blent—

Even the changeful spray which the torrent cast

As it downward went!

I stood and gazed with a sad and heavy eye

On the waterfall—

And with a shouting voice of agony

On thy name did call!

II.

With a yearning hope, from my wrung and aching heart

I call'd on thee—

And the lonely echoes from the rocks above

They answer'd me!

Glad and familiar as a household word

Was that cherish'd name—

But in that grieving hour, faintly heard,

'T was not the same!

Solemn and sad, with a distant knelling cry,

On my heart it fell—

'T was as if the word "Welcome" had been answer'd by

The word "FAREWELL!"

THE BANNER OF THE COVENANTERS.

[At the Mareschal College at Aberdeen, among other valuable curiosities, they show one of the banners formerly belonging to the Covenanters; it is of white silk, with the motto, "Spe Expecto," in red letters; and underneath, the English inscription, "For Religion, King, and Kingdoms." The banner is much torn, but otherwise in good preservation.]

I.

HERE, where the rain-drops may not fall, the sunshine doth
not play,
Where the unfelt and distant breeze in whispers dies away ;
Here, where the stranger paces slow along the silent halls,
Why mutely art thou hanging thus against the massive
walls ?
Thou, that hast seen blood shed for thee—that midst the
battle-tide
Hast faintly lit the soldier's eye with triumph ere he died ;
Bright banner, which hath witness'd oft the struggles of the
free,
Emblem of proud and holy hope, is this a place for *thee* ?

II.

Wake! wave aloft, thou Banner! let every snowy fold
Float on our wild, unconquer'd hills, as in the days of
old:

Hang out, and give again to Death a glory and a charm,
Where Heaven's pure dew may freshen thee, and Heaven's
pure sunshine warm.

Wake, wave aloft!

I hear the silk low rustling on the
breeze,
Which whistles through the lofty fir, and bends the birchen
trees;
I hear the tread of warriors arm'd to conquer or to die;
Their bed or bier the heathery hill, their canopy the sky.

III.

What, what is life or death to them? *they* only feel and
know
Freedom is to be struggled for, with an unworthy foe—
Their homes—their hearths—the all for which their fathers,
too, have fought,
And liberty to breathe the prayers their cradled lips were
taught.

On, on they rush—like mountain streams resistlessly they
sweep—

On! those who live are heroes now—and martyrs those who
sleep!

While still the snow-white Banner waves above the field of
strife,

With a proud triumph, as it were a thing of soul and life.

IV.

They stand—they bleed—they fall! they make one brief
and breathless pause,

And gaze with fading eyes upon the standard of their
cause ;—

Again they brave the strife of death, again each weary limb
Faintly obeys the warrior soul, tho' earth's best hopes grow
dim ;—

The mountain-rills are red with blood, the pure and quiet
sky

Rings with the shouts of those who win, the groans of those
who die ;

Taken—re-taken—raised again, but soil'd with clay and
gore,

Heavily, on the wild free breeze, that Banner floats once
more.

V.

I hear the wail of women now : the dreadful day is done :
God's creatures wait to strive and slay until to-morrow's
sun

I hear the heavy breathing of the weary ones who sleep,
The death-sob and the dying word, " the voice of them that
weep ;"

The half-choked grief of those who, while they stifle back
their breath,

Scarce know if what they watch be hush'd in slumber or
in death ;

While mournfully, as if it knew and felt for their despair,
The moon-lit Banner flaps and falls upon the midnight air.

VI.

Morning ! the glad and glorious light ! the waking of God's
earth,

Which rouses men to stain with gore the soil that gave
them birth.

In the still sunshine sleeps the hill, the stream, the distant
town ;

In the still sunshine—clogg'd and stiff—the battle-flag
hangs down.

Peace is in Heaven, and Heaven's good gifts, but war is
amongst men—

Red blood is pouring on the hill, wild shouts are in the
glen ;

'T is past—they sink, they bleed, they fly—that faint, en-
feebled host,

Right is not might—the Banner-flag, the victory, are lost !

VII.

Heaven's dew hath drunk the crimson drops which on the
heather lay,

The rills that were so red with gore, go sparkling on their
way ;

The limbs that fought, the hearts that swell'd, are crum-
bled into dust,

The souls which strove are gone to meet the spirits of the
just ;

But that frail silken flag, for which, and under which, they
fought,

(And which e'en *now* retains its power upon the soul of
thought,)

Survives—a tatter'd, senseless thing—to meet the curious
eye,

And wake a momentary dream of hopes and days gone by.

VIII.

A momentary dream ! oh ! not for *one* poor transient hour,
Not for a brief and hurried day that flag exerts its power ;
Full flashing on our dormant souls the firm conviction
comes,

That what our fathers did for *theirs*, we could for *our*
homes.

We, *too*, could brave the giant arm that seeks to chain each
word,

And rule what form of prayer alone shall by our God be
heard :

We, too, in triumph or defeat, could drain our heart's best
veins,

While the good old cause of Liberty for Church and State
remains !

THE ROCK OF THE BETRAYED.

I.

IT was a Highland chieftain's son
Gazed sadly from the hill :
And they saw him shrink from the autumn wind,
As its blast came keen and chill.

II.

His stately mother saw,—and spoke
With the heartless voice of pride ;
“ 'T is well I have a stouter son
The border wars to ride.”

III.

His jealous brother saw, and stood,
Red-hair'd, and fierce, and tall,
Muttering low words of fiendish hope
To be the lord of all.

IV.

But sickly Allan heard them not,
As he look'd o'er land and lea ;
He was thinking of the sunny climes
That lie beyond the sea.

V.

He was thinking of the native land
Whose breeze he could not bear ;
Whose wild free beauty he must leave,
To breathe a warmer air.

VI.

He was dreaming of his childhood's haunts,
And his grey-hair'd father's praise ;
And the chance of death which hung so near
And darken'd his young days.

VII.

So he turn'd, and bade them both farewell,
With a calm and mournful smile ;
And he spoke of dwelling far away,
But only for a while.

VIII.

And if a pang of bitter grief
Shot wildly through his heart,
No man heard Allan Douglas sigh,
Nor saw the tear-drop start :

IX.

For he left in Scotland none who cared
If e'er he should return,
In castle hall, or cottage low,
By river or by burn.

X.

Only upon the heather brae
His quivering lip he press'd ;
And clasp'd the senseless birchen tree,
And strain'd it to his breast ;

XI.

Because the human heart is full
Of love that *must* be given,
However check'd, estranged, and chill'd,
To something under Heaven.

XII.

And these things had been friends to him
Thro' a life of lonely hours—
The blue lake, and the waving birch,
And the low broom's scented flowers.

* * * *

XIII.

Twice had the snow been on the hills,
And twice the soft spring rain,
When Allan Douglas bent his way
To his native land again.

XIV.

More healthful glow'd his hollow cheek,
His step was firm and free,
And he brought a fair Italian girl
His bonny bride to be.

XV.

But darkly sneer'd his brother cold,
When he saw that maiden fair,
“Is a foreign minion come to wed
The Highland chieftain's heir?”

XVI.

And darkly gloom'd the mother's brow
As she said, "Am I so old,
That a stranger must so soon come here
The castle keys to hold?"

XVII.

Then spoke the young Italian girl
With a sweet and modest grace,
As she lifted up her soft black eyes
And look'd them in the face:

XVIII.

"A stranger and an orphan comes
To Allan's native land,
And she needs the mother's welcome smile,
And the brother's friendly hand.

XIX.

"Be thine! oh, stately lady—thine—
The rule that thou dost crave,
For Allan's love is all I earn'd,
And all I seek to have.

XX.

“ And trust me, brother, tho’ my words
In foreign accents fall,
The *heart* is of no country born,
And my heart will love you *all*.”

XXI.

But vain the music of her tongue
Against the hate they bore;
And when a babe her love had bless’d
They hated her the more.

XXII.

They hated her the more because
That babe must be the heir,
And his dark and lovely eyes at times
His mother’s look would wear.

XXIII.

But lo! the keen cold winter came
With many a bitter blast:
It pierced thro’ sickly Allan’s frame,—
He droop’d and died at last!

XXIV.

Oh! mournfully at early morn
That young wife sat and wept,—
And mournfully, when day was done,
To her widow'd couch she crept,—

XXV.

And mournfully at noon she rock'd
The baby on her knee;
“ There is no pity in their hearts,
My child, for thee and me.

XXVI.

“ There was no pity in their hearts
For him who is at rest:
How should they feel for his young son
Who slumbers at my breast?”

XXVII.

The red-hair'd brother saw her tears,
And said, “ Nay, cease thy moan—
Come forth into the morning air,
And weep no more alone !”

XXVIII.

The proud step-mother chid her woe ;—

“ Even for thy infant’s sake

Go forth into the morning air,

And sail upon the lake !”

XXIX.

There seem’d some feeling for her state ;

Their words were fair and mild ;

Yet she shudder’d as she whisper’d low,

“ God shield me and my child !”

XXX.

“ Come !” said dead Allan’s brother stern,

“ Why dost thou tremble so ?

“ Come !”—and with doubt and fear perplex’d,

The lady rose to go.

XXXI.

They glided over the glassy lake,

’Till its lulling murmur smote,

With a death-like omen, to and fro’,

Against the heaving boat.

XXXII.

And no one spoke ;—that brother still
His face averted kept,
And the lady's tears fell fast and free
O'er her infant as it slept.

XXXIII.

The cold faint evening breeze sprang up
And found them floating on ;
They glided o'er the glassy lake
Till the day's last streak was gone—

XXXIV.

Till the day's last streak had died away
From the chill and purple strand,
And a mist was on the water's face
And a damp dew on the land ;

XXXV.

Till you could not trace the living hue
Of lip, or cheek, or eye,
But the outline of each countenance
Drawn dark against the sky.

XXXVI.

And all things had a ghastly look,
An aspect strange and drear ;—
The lady look'd to the distant shore
And her heart beat wild with fear.

* * * *

XXXVII.

There is a rock whose jutting height
Stands frowning o'er that lake,
Where the faintest call of the bugle horn
The echo's voice will wake :—

XXXVIII.

And there the water lifts no wave
To the breeze, so fresh and cool,
But lies within the dark rock's curve,
Like a black and gloomy pool.

XXXIX.

Its depth is great,—a stone thrown in
Hath a dull descending sound,
The plummet hath not there been cast
Which resting-place hath found.

XL.

And scatter'd firs and birch-trees grow
On the summit, here and there—
Lonely and joylessly they wave,
Like an old man's thin grey hair.

XLI.

But not to nature's hand it owes
Its mournfulness alone,
For vague tradition gives the spot
A horror of its own.

XLII.

The boatman doffs his cap beneath
Its dark o'er-hanging shade,
And whispers low its Gaelic name,—
“THE ROCK OF THE BETRAY'D.”

XLIII.

And when the wind, which never curls
That pool, goes sweeping by,
Bending the firs and birchen trees
With a low and moaning sigh,—

XLIV.

He'll tell you that the sound which comes
So strange, and faint, and dim,
Is only heard at one set hour,
And call'd "THE LADY'S HYMN."

THE LAMENT FOR SHUIL DONALD'S
DAUGHTER.

I.

IN old Shuil Donald's cottage there are many voices weeping,
And stifled sobs, and murmurings of sorrow wild and
vain,
For the old man's cherish'd blessing on her bed of death
lies sleeping,—
The sleep from which no human wish can rouse her soul
again.
Oh, dark are now those gentle eyes which shone beneath
their lashes
So full of laughter and of love—it seems but yesterday—
Well may Shuil Donald mourn beside his hearth's forsaken
ashes,
His lily of the valley is wither'd away!

II.

The spring shall come to *other* hearts with breezes and with
 showers,

But lonely winter still shall reign in old Shuil Donald's
 home ;

Others may raise the song of joy, and laugh away the hours,
 But *he*—oh ! never more may joy to *his* lone dwelling
 come.

Her name shall be an empty sound, in idle converse spoken,
 Forgotten shall she be by those who mourn her most
 to-day—

All, all but one, who wanders with his Highland spirit
 broken,

His lily of the valley is wither'd away !

III.

And *he*—long, long, at even-tide, when sunset rays are
 gleaming,

That sad old man shall sit within his lonely cottage door,
 Desolate, desolate shall sit, and muse with idle dreaming

On days when her returning step came quick across the
 moor.

Oh! never more her quiet smile, her cheerful voice of
greeting,

Shall rouse to warmth his aged heart, when darkly sinks
the day—

Never, oh! never more on earth those loved ones may be
meeting—

His lily of the valley is wither'd away!

WEEP NOT FOR HIM THAT DIETH.

“ Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.”—*Jeremiah* xxii. 10.

I.

WEEP not for him that dieth—
For he sleeps, and is at rest;
And the couch whereon he lieth
Is the green earth's quiet breast:
But weep for him who pineth
On a far land's hateful shore,
Who wearily declineth
Where ye see his face no more!

II.

Weep not for him that dieth,
For friends are round his bed,
And many a young lip sigheth
When they name the early dead:

But weep for him that liveth
 Where none will know or care,
 When the groan his faint heart giveth
 Is the last sigh of despair.

III.

Weep not for him that dieth,
 For his struggling soul is free,
 And the world from which it flieth
 Is a world of misery ;
 But weep for him that weareth
 The captive's galling chain :
 To the agony *he* beareth,
 Death were but little pain.

IV.

Weep not for him that dieth,
 For *he* hath ceased from tears,
 And a voice to his replieth
 Which he hath not heard for years ;
 But weep for him who weepeth
 On that cold land's cruel shore—
 Blest, blest is he that sleepeth,—
 Weep for the dead no more !

THE CHILD OF EARTH.

I.

Fainter her slow step falls from day to day,
Death's hand is heavy on her darkening brow ;
Yet doth she fondly cling to earth, and say,
“ I am content to die, but, oh ! not now !
Not while the blossoms of the joyous spring
Make the warm air such luxury to breathe ;
Not while the birds such lays of gladness sing ;
Not while bright flowers around my footsteps wreath.
Spare me, great God, lift up my drooping brow !
I am content to die—but, oh ! not now ! ”

II.

The spring hath ripen'd into summer-time,
The season's viewless boundary is past ;
The glorious sun hath reach'd his burning prime ;
Oh ! must this glimpse of beauty be the last ?
“ Let me not perish while o'er land and lea
With silent steps the lord of light moves on ;
Nor while the murmur of the mountain bee
Greets my dull ear with music in its tone !
Pale sickness dims my eye, and clouds my brow ;
I am content to die—but, oh ! not now ! ”

III.

Summer is gone, and autumn's soberer hues
Tint the ripe fruits, and gild the waving corn ;
The huntsman swift the flying game pursues,
Shouts the halloo, and winds his eager horn.
“ Spare me awhile to wander forth and gaze
On the broad meadows and the quiet stream,
To watch in silence while the evening rays
Slant thro' the fading trees with ruddy gleam !
Cooler the breezes play around my brow ;
I am content to die—but, oh ! not now ! ”

IV.

The bleak wind whistles, snow-showers, far and near,
Drift without echo to the whitening ground ;
Autumn hath pass'd away, and, cold and drear,
Winter stalks on, with frozen mantle bound.
Yet still that prayer ascends :—“ Oh ! laughingly
My little brothers round the warm hearth crowd,
Our home-fire blazes broad, and bright, and high,
And the roof rings with voices glad and loud ;
Spare me awhile ! raise up my drooping brow !
I am content to die—but, oh ! not now ! ”

V.

The spring is come again—the joyful spring !
Again the banks with clustering flowers are spread ;
The wild bird dips upon its wanton wing :—
The child of earth is number'd with the dead !
“ Thee never more the sunshine shall awake,
Beaming all redly thro' the lattice-pane ;
The steps of friends thy slumbers may not break,
Nor fond familiar voice arouse again !
Death's silent shadow veils thy darken'd brow ;
Why didst thou linger ?—thou art happier now ! ”

THE CHRISTENING.

(Of my Brother's infant Son, February 21, 1839.)

I.

THERE is a sound of laughter light and gay,
And hurried welcomes, as of joyful greeting ;
The stir and murmur of a holiday,
The grouping of glad friends each other meeting :
And in the midst art THOU—thou tiny flower,
Whose coming hath so cheer'd this wintry hour !

II.

Helpless thou liest, young blossom of our love !
The sunshine of fond smiles around thee beaming,
Blessings call'd down on thee from Heaven above,
And every heart about *thy future* dreaming :—
Meek peace and utter innocence are now
The sole expression of thy baby brow.

III.

Helpless thou liest, thy little waxen face
Eagerly scann'd by our inquiring glances,
Hoping some lovely likeness there to trace,
Which fancy finds, and so thy worth enhances ;
Clothing with thought mature, and power of mind,
Those infant features, yet so faintly lined.

IV.

And still thy youthful mother bendeth down
Her large, soft, loving eyes, brimful of gladness,
Her cheek almost as waxen as thine own,
Her heart as innocently free from sadness :
And still a brighter smile her red lip wears,
As each her young son's loveliness declares.

V.

And sometimes as we gaze a sigh is heard,
(Though from the happy group all grief seems banish'd,)
As thou recallest, little nestling bird,
Some long familiar face whose light hath vanish'd ;
Some name, which yet hath power our hearts to thrill—
Some smile, whose buried beauty haunts us still !

VI.

Ah! most to Her, the early widow'd, come

Thoughts of the blossoms that from earth have perish'd;
Lost to her lone and solitary home,

Though in her brooding memory fondly cherish'd :—
Her little grandson's baby-smiles recall
Not *one* regretted hope of youth, but *all!*

VII.

Her Son's son lies upon her cradling knee,

And bids her heart return, with mournful dreaming,
To her own first-born's helpless infancy,

When hope—youth's guiding star—was brightly beaming;
And He, who died too soon, stood by and smiled,
And bless'd alike the mother and her child.

VIII.

Since then, how many a year hath fled past!

What unforeseen events, what joys, what sorrows,
With sunshine or with clouds have overcast

The long succession of her lonely morrows;
Ere musing o'er this fair and new-born face,
A fresh link carried on her orphan'd Race!

IX.

Fair child, that race is not by man's award
 Ennobled,—but by God; no titles sounded
 By herald's trump, or smooth and flattering bard,
 Proclaim within what lines *thy* rank is bounded :—
Thy power hereditary none confine,
 The gift of Genius, boy, by right is thine!

X.

Be humble, for it is an envied thing ;
 And men whose creeping hearts have long submitted
 Around the column'd height to clasp and cling
 Of Titled Pride—by man to man transmitted,—
 Will grudge the power they have less cause to dread,
 Oppose thee living, and malign when dead.

XI.

One of thy lineage served his country well
 (Though with her need her gratitude departed) ;
 What in her memory now is left to dwell?
 The *faults* of him who died half broken-hearted :—
 And those, whose envious hands ne'er stretch'd to save,
 Pluck down the laurels springing from his grave.

XII.

Yet hush ! it is a solemn hour ; and far
 Be human bitterness and vain upbraiding ;
 With hope we watch thy rising, thou young star,
 Hope not *all* earthly, or it were too fading ;
 For we are met to usher in thy life,
 With Prayer,—which lifteth hearts, and quelleth strife !

XIII.

Hush'd is the busy group, and still as death ;
 All at the sacred altar meekly kneeling ;
 For *thy* sake, who so lately drew thy breath,
 All unto Heaven with earnest heart appealing.
 A solemn voice addresses the Most High,
 And with a murmuring echo we reply.

XIV.

All holy be the hour ! and, oh ! may Heaven
 Look down and bless the anxious mother's part,
 As meekly she confides the treasure given
 So lately to her young and hoping heart ;
 And pleads that God's great love may be his stay,
 And guide her little Wanderer on his way.

XV.

So let it be! and when the noble head
Of thy true-hearted father, babe beloved,
Now glossy dark, is silver-gray instead,
And thy young birth-day far away removed;
Still may'st thou be a comfort and a joy,—
Still welcome as this day, unconscious boy!

THE MOTHER'S LAST WATCH.

Written on the occasion of the death of the infant daughter of Her Grace the
Duchess of Sutherland.

I.

HARK, through the proudly decorated halls,
How strangely sounds the voice of bitter woe,
Where steps that dread their echo as it falls
Steal silently and sadly to and fro.
There, wither'd lies the bud so lately given,
And, beautiful in grief as when she smiled,
Bow'd 'neath the unexpected stroke of Heaven,
The mourning Mother watches o'er her Child.

II.

'Tis her last Watch! Sleep seals those infant lids,
Dark fall the lashes on that roseleaf cheek—
But oh!—the look is there, which Hope forbids;
Of Death—of Death those heavy eyelids speak!—

'Tis her last Watch!—no more that gentle hand
With cautious love shall curtain out the light—
No more that graceful form shall mutely stand
And bless thy slumbers thro' the shadowy night.

III.

Hush'd is the innocent heart which throbbing pain,
Vain hope, and vain regret had never moved.
The God who gave hath claim'd his gift again,
And angels welcome her, on earth so loved.
Yet still of hope and fear the endless strife
Within that Mother's bosom faintly swells,
Still, still she gazes on, and dreams of life,
Though the fond falsehood Reason's pow'r repels.

IV.

Unheard each word of comfort faintly falls
From lips whose tones in other days were dear,
Her infant's smile is all her heart recalls,—
Her infant's voice is all her heart can hear;—
She clasps its hand, the feverish glow of *hers*
Wakes into warmth the freezing current's flow
She bends,—her sobbing breath a ringlet stirs
With mimic life upon its pallid brow.

V.

Oh! what a mournful thing is human love!

In happier days of hope and bliss gone by
The Mother's heart with pitying throb would move
If but a teardrop dimm'd that laughing eye:
And now she prays that Heaven the boon may give
To hear from those pale lips a cry of pain—
Aught that could bid her sinking soul revive,
And tell the mourner thou wert *hers* again!

VI.

Ah! never more that dream of hope may be!—

The summer breeze among the boughs shall wave,
The summer sun beam bright o'er land and lea,
But thou, no spring shall wake thee from the grave!
No more those little rosy lips shall greet
With brightly sudden smile her look of pride;
No more with falt'ring steps those fairy feet
Shall totter onward to her cherish'd side.

VII.

All, all is over! See, with painful start

She wakens from her trance to feel the whole,
And know the pang even from thy *corse* to part—
Thou vainly guarded treasure of her soul!

The hand that, ah ! so often hath caress'd,
Aids now to place thee in thy narrow bed !
The last wild kiss upon thy cheek is press'd—
The last fond tear upon thy coffin shed !
And all is hush'd : but oft thro' Life's dull track
(When time her present sorrow hath beguiled)
That pale, sweet brow shall dimly bring us back
The Mother's last Watch o'er her fairy Child !

SONNETS.

SONNETS.

I AM aware that many strict critics object to the term "Sonnet" being applied to any poems but those written in the exact Italian measure; unjustly, as I think, since the rich cadences and extreme facility of rhyming which make the Petrarchian stanza so easy and so beautiful in the original, do not exist in English. Milton,—who had travelled much in Italy; who had been the idol of the Della Cruscan Academy; who counted among his personal friends and flatterers, not only "that renowned Provost of Eton" Sir Henry Wootton (previously ambassador to Venice), but all the most learned and distinguished men among the Florentine nobility; to record whose talents as a linguist, Francini borrowed from Scripture the somewhat heathenishly worded compliment—

———"Nell' altera Babelle
Per TE il parlar confuse Giove in vano;"—

Milton,—whose taste was formed in the Tuscan schools, adhered closely to the Italian model. But Shakspeare—master of no melody but that of his native tongue, in which he reigned, and still reigns, without a rival—has left us upwards of one hundred and fifty "Sonnets," in the simple measure of three alternate quatrains, closed by two heroic lines; evidently considering the title generally applicable to all poems which follow Petrarch so far as to consist of a single thought carried through fourteen lines, however their rhythm may be modified to suit the necessities of our language. I am inclined to think the Shakspearian stanza a better English model than that adopted by Milton. The latter requires the chiselled and polished elegance of Rogers, or the skill of Wordsworth (whose "Sonnet in defence of Sonnets" is perhaps the most beautiful modern specimen of the imported foreign measure), to prevent that appearance of labour and stiffness too often consequent on the difficulty of its construction; and if in the expression of this opinion I should seem to differ from those whose judgment ought to guide mine, I can only hope they will not consider me a rebellious fellow-servant of the Muses, since these observations are prefixed less in the form of a defence, than as an apology for the measure I have chosen.

SONNET I.

ON SEEING THE BUST OF THE YOUNG
PRINCESS DE MONTFORT

(In the studio of Bartolini, at Florence).

SWEET marble! didst thou merely represent,
In lieu of her on whom our glances rest,
Some common loveliness,—we were content,
As with a modell'd beauty, well express'd;
But, by the very skill which makes thee seem
So like HER bright and intellectual face,
The heart is led unsatisfied to dream;
For sculpture cannot give the breathing grace,
The light which plays beneath that shadowy brow,
Like sunshine on the fountains of the south,—
The blush which tints that cheek with roseate glow,—
The smile which hovers round that angel-mouth:
No! such the form o'er which Pygmalion sigh'd—
Too fair to be complete while SOUL was still denied!

SONNET II.

RAPHAEL.

BLESSED wert thou, whom Death, and not Decay,
Bore from the world on swift and shadowy wings,
Ere age or weakness dimm'd one brilliant ray
Of thy rapt spirit's high imaginings!
While yet thy heart was full of fervid love,
And thou wert haunted by resistless dreams
Of all in earth beneath, or Heaven above,
On which the light of beauty richest gleams,—
Dead, but not deathlike, wert thou borne along;
Silent and cold, oh thou that didst combine
Sculpture, and painting, and the gift of song;
While on thy brow, and on that work divine*
Borne with thee, glow'd from thine Italian sky
A light whose glory spoke of immortality!

* The celebrated picture of the Transfiguration (at which Raphael is said to have worked the evening before his death) was borne at the bier-head in the procession of his funeral.

SONNET III.

THE FORNARINA.

AND bless'd was she thou lovedst, for whose sake
Thy wit did veil in fanciful disguise
The answer which thou wert compell'd to make
To Rome's High Priest, and call'd her then "Thine
Eyes;" *
Tho' of her life obscure there is no trace,
Save where its thread with THY bright history twines,—
Tho' all we know of her be that sweet face
Whose nameless beauty from thy canvass shines,—
Dependent still upon her Raphael's fame,
And but recorded by her low degree,
As one who had in life no higher claim
Than to be painted and be loved by thee;—
Yet would I be forgot, as she is now,
Once to have press'd my lips on that seraphic brow!

* Leo X., visiting Raphael in his studio, and seeing there the Fornarina, asked who and what she was? the painter replied, "Sono i miei occhi."

SONNET IV.

BE frank with me, and I accept my lot ;
But deal not with me as a grieving child,
Who for the loss of that which he hath not
Is by a show of kindness thus beguiled.
Raise not for me, from its enshrouded tomb,
The ghostly likeness of a hope deceased ;
Nor think to cheat the darkness of my doom
By wavering doubts how far thou art released:
This dressing Pity in the garb of Love,—
This effort of the heart to *seem* the same,—
These sighs and lingerings, (which nothing prove
But that thou leav'st me with a kind of shame,)—
Remind me more, by their most vain deceit,
Of the dear loss of all which thou dost counterfeit.

SONNET V.

BECAUSE I know that there is that in me
Of which thou shouldst be proud, and not ashamed,—
Because I feel one made *thy* choice should be
Not even by fools and slanderers rashly blamed,—
Because I fear, howe'er thy soul may strive
Against the weakness of that inward pain,
The falsehoods which my enemies contrive
Not always seek to wound thine ear in vain,—
Therefore I sometimes weep, when I should smile,
At all the vain frivolity and sin
Which those who know me not (yet me revile)—
My would-be judges—cast my actions in ;
But else their malice hath nor sting nor smart—
For I appeal from them, Beloved, to thine own heart !

SONNET VI.

WHERE the red wine-cup floweth, there art thou!

Where luxury curtains out the evening sky;—

Triumphant Mirth sits flush'd upon thy brow,

And ready laughter lurks within thine eye.

Where the long day declineth, lone I sit,

In idle thought, my listless hands entwined,

And, faintly smiling at remember'd wit,

Act the scene over to my musing mind.

In my lone dreams I hear thy eloquent voice,

I see the pleased attention of the throng,

And bid my spirit in thy joy rejoice,

Lest in love's selfishness I do thee wrong.

Ah! midst that proud and mirthful company

Send'st *thou* no wandering thought to love and me?

SONNET VII.

LIKE an enfranchised bird, who wildly springs,
With a keen sparkle in his glancing eye
And a strong effort in his quivering wings,
Up to the blue vault of the happy sky,—
So my enamour'd heart, so long thine own,
At length from Love's imprisonment set free,
Goes forth into the open world alone,
Glad and exulting in its liberty :
But like that helpless bird, (confined so long,
His weary wings have lost all power to soar,)
Who soon forgets to trill his joyous song,
And, feebly fluttering, sinks to earth once more,—
So, from its former bonds released in vain,
My heart still feels the weight of that remember'd chain.

SONNET VIII.

TO MY BOOKS.

SILENT companions of the lonely hour,
Friends, who can never alter or forsake,
Who for inconstant roving have no power,
And all neglect, perforce, must calmly take,—
Let me return to YOU ; this turmoil ending
Which worldly cares have in my spirit wrought,
And, o'er your old familiar pages bending,
Refresh my mind with many a tranquil thought :
Till, haply meeting there, from time to time,
Fancies, the audible echo of my own,
'Twill be like hearing in a foreign clime
My native language spoke in friendly tone,
And with a sort of welcome I shall dwell
On these, my unripe musings, told so well.

SONNET IX.

TO THE COUNTESS HELÈNE ZAVADOWSKY.

WHEN our young Queen put on her rightful crown
In Gothic Westminster's long-hallow'd walls,
The eye upon no lovelier sight look'd down
Than thou, fair Russian! Memory still recalls
The soft light of thy sapphire-colour'd eyes,
The rich twine of thy simply-braided hair,
And the low murmur of the crowd's surprise
To see thee pass along so strangely fair.
Nor didst thou charm by looks and smiles alone,—
Thy "broken English" had its share of grace ;
For something in thy accent and thy tone
So match'd the beauty of thy gentle face,
We seem'd to hear our old familiar words
Set to some foreign lute or harp's melodious chords!

SONNET X.

TO TAGLIONI.

SPIRIT of Grace, whose airy footsteps fall
So lightly! sure the looker-on must be
Most dull of fancy who doth not recall
Some sweet comparison to picture thee!
The white snow, drifting in its soundless showers,—
The young bird resting on a summer-bough,—
The south-wind bending down the opening flowers,—
The clear wave lifted with a gentle flow,—
Rippling and bright, advancing and retreating,
Curling around the rock its dancing spray,
Like a fair child whose kiss of gentle greeting
Woos a companion to make holiday,—
Such are the thoughts of beauty round me shed,
While pleased my eyes pursue thy light elastic tread.

SONNET XI.

THE MOSS-WALK AT MARKLY, SUSSEX.

(To S. D.)

GREEN avenue, whose shadow dim and sweet
Pleasantly shelter'd me in days of yore,
Dear lost companion, whose slow-pacing feet
Then wander'd with me on that moss-paved floor,—
Still, like a natural temple, spring those trees,
Their column'd stems high-arching over-head?
Still dost THOU love, while sighs the murmuring breeze,
At Summer eve that velvet path to tread?
Then, gentle friend, in whose unworldly eyes,
And on whose calm, serene, expressive brow,
The light of many a prayer reflected lies,
As thou with Heaven didst constant commune know,—
Though, in this world, divided we must be,
Kneel in that quiet spot, and pray to God for ME!

SONNET XII.

THE DISDAINED LOVER.

I STAND beside the waves,—the mournful waves,—
Where thou didst stand in silence and in fear,
For thou wert train'd by custom's haughty slaves,
And love, from such as I, disdain'd to hear ;
Yet, with the murmur of the echoing sea,
And the monotonous billows, rolling on,
Were mingled sounds of weeping,—for in thee
All nature was not harden'd into stone:
And from the shore there came a distant chime
From the old village-clock ;—ah! since that day,
Like a dull passing-bell each stroke of time
Falls on my heart; and in the ocean spray
A voice of lamentation seems to dwell,
As in that bitter hour of agonised farewell!

SONNET XIII.

THE WEAVER.

LITTLE they think, the giddy and the vain,
 Wandering at pleasure 'neath the shady trees,
While the light glossy silk or rustling train
 Shines in the sun or flutters in the breeze,
How the sick weaver plies the incessant loom,
 Crossing in silence the perplexing thread,
Pent in the confines of one narrow room,
 Where droops complainingly his cheerless head:—
Little they think with what dull anxious eyes,
 Nor by what nerveless, thin, and trembling hands,
The devious mingling of those various dyes
 Were wrought to answer Luxury's commands:
But the day cometh when the tired shall rest,—
Where weary Lazarus leans his head on Abraham's breast!

SONNET XIV.

“ Ay ojuelos verdes,
 Ay los mis ojuelos,
 Ay hagan los cielos
 Que de mi te acuerdes!”*

OH! crystal eyes, in which my image lay
 While I was near, as in a fountain's wave ;
 Let it not in like manner pass away
 When I am gone ; for I am Love's true slave,
 And in *my* eyes thine image dwells enshrined,
 Like one who dazzled hath beheld the sun,
 So that to other beauty I am blind,
 And scarce distinguish what I gaze upon :
 Let it be thus with thee ! By all our vows,—
 By the true token-ring upon thy hand,—
 Let such remembrance as my worth allows
 Between thee and each bright temptation stand,—
 That I, in those clear orbs, on my return,
 As in the wave's green depth, my shadow may discern.

* See the notes to a beautiful volume of poems by Bryant, where this fragment of a Spanish ballad is given.

SONNET XV.

TO MISS AUGUSTA COWELL.

[To whom I owe the popularity of some of my favourite ballads.]

WHEN thy light fingers touch th' obedient chords,
Which, with a gentle murmur, low respond,
Waiting the measure of the coming words
From that sweet voice, so plaintive, sad, and fond,—
Say does some wingéd Ariel, hovering near,
Teach thee his island music note for note,
That thou may'st copy with an echo clear
Th' enchanted symphonies that round thee float?
Or do all Melodies, whilst thou art playing,
(Each with the offering of some chorded sound,)
On the low slanting sunbeam earthward straying,
Like meek subservient spirits wander round;
In Harmony's dim language asking thee
Which of them, for the hour, shall thy attendant be?

SONNET XVI.

PRINCESS MARIE OF WIRTEMBERG.

WHITE Rose of Bourbon's branch, so early faded!

When thou wert carried to thy silent rest,

And every brow with heavy gloom was shaded,

And every heart with fond regret oppress'd,—

Sweet was the thought thy brother gave to him

Who, far away on Ocean's restless wave,

Could not behold those fair eyes closed and dim,

Nor see thee laid in thy untimely grave!

And, pitying him who yet thy loss must hear,—

Whose absent breast a later pang must feel,—

Murmur'd, with touching sadness, by thy bier,

“ Adieu for me! *Adieu for Joinville!* ”

Sweet was the thought, and tender was the heart

Which thus remember'd *all* who in its love had part.*

* The touching anecdote is told of the youthful Duc d'Aumale, that, when the members of the royal family were bidding farewell to the sacred remains of the Princess Marie (the Prince de Joinville being then absent with his ship), he turned with a gush of sorrow, and bid adieu, not only for himself, but in the name of his absent brother.

XVII.

Nor wert thou only by thy kindred wept,—
 Young mother! gentle daughter! cherish'd wife!
Deep in her memory France hath fondly kept
 The records of thy unassuming life:
Oft shall the statue heroine* bring to mind,—
 As pale it gleams beneath the light of day,
In all the thoughtful grace by thee design'd,—
 The worth and talent which have pass'd away!
Oft shall the old, who see thy child pass by,
 Smiling and glad, despite his orphan'd lot,
Look on him with a blessing and a sigh;
 As one who suffers loss, yet feels it not,
But lifting up his innocent eyes in prayer,
Vaguely imagines Heaven,—foretaught that thou art THERE!

* The statue of Joan of Arc, designed and executed by the Princess herself.

SONNET XVIII.

ON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF
THE COUNTESS OF BURLINGTON.

[Inscribed, with deep and earnest sympathy, to her Mother,
The Countess of Carlisle.]

SINCE in the pleasant time of opening flowers
That flow'r, Her life, was doom'd to fade away,—
Since Her dear loss hath shaded lovely hours,
And turn'd to mourning all the smiles of May,—
Henceforward when the warm soft breath of Spring
Bids cowslips star the meadows, thick and sweet ;
When doves are in the green wood murmuring,
And children wander with delighted feet ;
When, by their own rich beauty downward bent,
Soft Guelder-roses hang their tufts of snow,
And purple lilacs yield a fragrant scent,
And bright laburnum droops its yellow bough ;—
Let that Spring-time be welcomed with a sigh,
For Her lamented sake,—who was so young to die !

XIX.

But since, in all that brief Life's narrow scope,
No day pass'd by without some gentle deed,
Let us not "mourn like them that have no hope,"
Though sharp the stroke,—and suddenly decreed ;
For still, when Spring puts out her tender leaves,
And Nature's beauty seems to bud in vain,
(Since then the yearning spirit doubly grieves
With fresh remembrance of unconquer'd pain,)
Returns the precious memory of all
The grace and goodness of that creature fair,
Whom it pleased God in early days to call
From this dim world of trouble, toil, and care,—
And seldom is such bless'd conviction given
That She we mourn on Earth is now a Saint in Heaven!

A VOICE FROM THE FACTORIES,

DEDICATED TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD ASHLEY.

(Reprinted from the edition of 1836.)

A VOICE FROM THE FACTORIES.

“ As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren bosom starves her generous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains,
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins,
And as in climes where winter holds his reign,
The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain,
Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies,—
So draw Mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unform'd, unfriended by those kindly cares
That health and vigour to the soul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.”

Gray's 'Alliance of Education and Government.'

“ The abuses even of such a business must be cautiously dealt with; lest, in eradicating them, we shake or disorder the whole fabric. We admit, however, that the case of CHILDREN employed in the Cotton Factories is one of those which call fairly for legislative regulation.”

M'CULLOCH.

A

VOICE FROM THE FACTORIES.

I.

WHEN fallen man from Paradise was driven
Forth to a world of labour, death, and care,
Still of his native Eden, bounteous Heaven
Resolved one brief memorial to spare,
And gave his offspring an imperfect share
Of that lost happiness, amid decay ;
Making their first *approach* to life seem fair,
And giving, for the Eden past away,
CHILDHOOD, the weary life's long happy holiday.

II.

Sacred to heavenly peace those years remain ;
And when with clouds their dawn is overcast,
Unnatural seem the sorrow and the pain .
(Which rosy joy flies forth to banish fast,
Because that season's sadness may not last).
Light is their grief! a word of fondness cheers
The unhaunted heart ; the shadow glideth past ;
Unknown to them the weight of boding fears,
And soft as dew on flowers their bright, ungrieving tears.

III.

See the stage-wonder (taught to earn its bread
By the exertion of an infant skill)
Forsake the wholesome slumbers of its bed,
And mime, obedient to the public will.
Where is the heart so cold that does not thrill
With a vexatious sympathy, to see
That child prepare to play its part, and still
With simulated airs of gaiety
Rise to the dangerous rope, and bend the supple knee ?

IV.

Painted and spangled, trembling there it stands,
Glances below for friend or father's face,
Then lifts its small round arms and feeble hands
With the taught movements of an artist's grace ;
Leaves its uncertain gilded resting-place—
Springs lightly as the elastic cord gives way—
And runs along with scarce perceptible pace—
Like a bright bird upon a waving spray,
Fluttering and sinking still, whene'er the branches play.

V.

Now watch ! a joyless and distorted smile
Its innocent lips assume (the dancer's leer !),
Conquering its terror for a little while ;
Then lets the TRUTH OF INFANCY appear,
And with a stare of numb'd and childish fear
Looks sadly towards the audience come to gaze
On the unwonted skill which costs so dear,
While still the applauding crowd, with pleased amaze,
Ring through its dizzy ears unwelcome shouts of praise.

VI.

What is it makes us feel relieved to see
 That hapless little dancer reach the ground ;
 With its whole spirit's elasticity
 Thrown into one glad, safe, triumphant bound ?
 Why are we sad, when, as it gazes round
 At that wide sea of paint, and gauze, and plumes,
 (Once more awake to sense, and sight, and sound,)
 The nature of its age it re-assumes,
 And one spontaneous smile at length its face illumines ?

VII.

Because we feel, for childhood's years and strength,
 Unnatural and hard the task hath been ;—
 Because our sicken'd souls revolt at length,
 And ask what infant innocence may mean
 Thus toiling thro' the artificial scene ;—
 Because at that word, CHILDHOOD, start to birth
 All dreams of hope and happiness serene—
 All thoughts of innocent joy that visit earth—
 Prayer—slumber—fondness—smiles—and hours of rosy
 mirth.

VIII.

And therefore, when we hear the shrill faint cries
Which mark the wanderings of the little sweep ;
Or when, with glittering teeth and sunny eyes,
The boy-Italian's voice, so soft and deep,
Asks alms for his poor marmoset asleep ;
They fill our hearts with pitying regret,
Those little vagrants doom'd so soon to weep,—
As tho' a term of joy for all was set,
And that *their* share of Life's long suffering was not yet.

IX.

Ever a toiling *child* doth make us sad :
'T is an unnatural and mournful sight,
Because we feel their smiles should be so glad,
Because we know their eyes should be so bright.
What is it, then, when, task'd beyond their might,
They labour all day long for others' gain,—
Nay, trespass on the still and pleasant night,
While uncompleted hours of toil remain ?
Poor little FACTORY SLAVES—for YOU these lines complain !

X.

Beyond all sorrow which the wanderer knows
Is that these little pent-up wretches feel ;
Where the air thick and close and stagnant grows,
And the low whirring of the incessant wheel
Dizzies the head and makes the senses reel :
There, shut for ever from the gladdening sky,
Vice premature and Care's corroding seal
Stamp on each sallow cheek their hateful die,
Line the smooth open brow, and sink the sadden'd eye.

XI.

For them the fervid summer only brings
A double curse of stifling withering heat ;
For them no flowers spring up, no wild bird sings,
No moss-grown walks refresh their weary feet ;—
No river's murmuring sound ;—no wood-walk, sweet
With many a flower the Learned slight and pass ;—
Nor meadow, with pale cowslips thickly set
Amid the soft leaves of its tufted grass,—
Lure *them* a childish stock of treasures to amass.

XII.

Have we forgotten our own infancy,
That joys so simple are to them denied?—
Our boyhood's hopes—our wanderings far and free,
Where yellow gorse-bush left the common wide
And open to the breeze?—The active pride
Which made each obstacle a pleasure seem ;
When, rashly glad, all danger we defied,
Dash'd thro' the brook by twilight's fading gleam,
Or scorn'd the tottering plank, and leapt the narrow stream ?

XIII.

In lieu of this,—from short and bitter night,
Sullen and sad the infant labourer creeps ;
He joys not in the glow of morning's light,
But with an idle yearning stands and weeps,
Envyng the babe that in its cradle sleeps :
And ever, as he slowly journeys on,
His listless tongue unbidden silence keeps ;
His fellow-labourers (*playmates* hath he none)
Walk by, as sad as he, nor hail the morning sun.

XIV.

Mark the result. Unnaturally debarr'd
All Nature's fresh and innocent delights,
While yet each germinating energy strives hard,
And pristine good with pristine evil fights ;
When every passing dream the heart excites,
And makes even *guarded* virtue insecure ;
Untaught, unchecked, they yield as vice invites :
With all around them cramped, confined, impure,
Fast spreads the moral plague which nothing new shall cure.

XV.

Yes, this reproach is added ; (infamous
In realms which own a Christian monarch's sway !)
Not suffering *only* is their portion, thus
Compell'd to toil their youthful lives away :
Excessive labour works the SOUL'S decay—
Quenches the intellectual light within—
Crushes with iron weight the mind's free play—
Steals from us LEISURE purer thoughts to win—
And leaves us sunk and lost in dull and native sin.

XVI.

Yet in the British senate men rise up,
 (The freeborn and the fathers of our land!)
 And, while these drink the dregs of Sorrow's cup,
 Deny the sufferings of the pining band.
 With nice-drawn calculations at command,
 They prove—rebut—explain—and reason long;
 Proud of each shallow argument they stand,
 And prostitute their utmost powers of tongue
 Feebly to justify this great and glaring wrong.

XVII.

So rose, with such a plausible defence
 Of the unalienable RIGHT OF GAIN,
 Those who against Truth's brightest eloquence
 Upheld the cause of torture and of pain:
 And fear of property's decrease made vain,
 For years, the hope of Christian charity
 To lift the curse from SLAVERY'S dark domain,
 And send across the wide Atlantic sea
 The watchword of brave men—the thrilling shout “BE
 FREE!”

XVIII.

Oh! shall it then be said that TYRANT acts
Are those which cause our country's looms to thrive?
That Merchant England's prosperous trade exacts
This bitter sacrifice, e'er she derive
That profit due for which the feeble strive?
Is her commercial avarice so keen,
That in her busy multitudinous hive
Hundreds must die like insects, scarcely seen,
While the thick-throng'd survivors work where they have
been?

XIX.

Forbid it, Spirit of the glorious Past
Which gain'd our Isle the surname of "The Free,"
And made our shores a refuge at the last
To all who would not bend the servile knee,
The vainly-vanquish'd sons of Liberty!
Here ever came the injured, the oppress'd,
Compell'd from the Oppressor's face to flee—
And found a home of shelter and of rest
In the warm generous heart that beat in England's breast.

XX.

Here came the Slave, who straightway burst his chain,
And knew that none could ever bind him more ;
Here came the melancholy sons of Spain ;
And here, more buoyant Gaul's illustrious poor
Waited the same bright day that shone before.
Here rests the Enthusiast Pole ! and views afar
With dreaming hope, from this protecting shore,
The trembling rays of Liberty's pale star
Shine forth in vain to light the too-unequal war !

XXI.

And shall REPROACH cling darkly to the name
Which every memory so much endears ?
Shall *we*, too, tyrannise,—and tardy Fame
Revoke the glory of our former years,
And stain Britannia's flag with children's tears ?
So shall the mercy of the English throne
Become a by-word in the Nations' ears,
As one who pitying heard the stranger's groan,
But to these nearer woes was cold and deaf as stone.

XXII.

Are there not changes made which grind the Poor?
 Are there not losses every day sustain'd,—
 Deep grievances, which make the spirit sore?
 And what the answer, when *these* have complain'd?
 “ For crying evils there hath been ordain'd
 The REMEDY OF CHANGE; to obey its call
 Some individual loss must be disdain'd,
 And pass as unavoidable and small,
 Weigh'd with the broad result of general good to all.”

XXIII.

Oh! such an evil *now* doth cry aloud!
 And CHANGE should be by generous hearts begun,
 Though slower gain attend the prosperous crowd,
 Lessening the fortunes for their children won.
 Why should it grieve a father, that his son
 Plain competence must moderately bless?
 That he must trade, even as his sire has done,
 Not born to independent idleness,
 Though honestly above all probable distress?

XXIV.

Rejoice! Thou hast not left enough of gold
From the lined heavy ledger, to entice
His drunken hand, irresolutely bold,
To squander it in haggard haunts of vice :—
The hollow rattling of the uncertain dice
Eats not the portion which thy love bestow'd ;—
Unable to afford that PLEASURE'S price,
Far off he slumbers in his calm abode,
And leaves the Idle Rich to follow Ruin's road.

XXV.

Happy his lot! For him there shall not be
The cold temptation given by vacant time ;
Leaving his young and uncurb'd spirit free
To wander thro' the feverish paths of crime !
For *him* the Sabbath bell's returning chime
Not vainly ushers in God's day of rest ;
No night of riot clouds the morning's prime :
Alert and glad, not languid and oppress'd,
He wakes, and with calm soul is the Creator bless'd.

XXVI.

Ye save for children! Fathers, is there not
 A plaintive magic in the name of child,
 Which makes you feel compassion for *their* lot
 On whom Prosperity hath never smiled?
 When with your OWN an hour hath been beguiled
 (For whom you hoard the still increasing store),
 Surely, against the face of Pity mild,
 Heart-hardening Custom vainly bars the door,
 For that less favour'd race—THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR.

XXVII.

“The happy homes of England!”—they have been
 A source of triumph, and a theme for song;
 And surely, if there be a hope serene
 And beautiful, which may to Earth belong,
 'Tis when (shut out the world's associate throng,
 And closed the busy day's fatiguing hum),
 Still waited for with expectation strong,
 Welcom'd with joy, and overjoy'd to come,
 The good man goes to seek the twilight rest of home.

XXVIII.

There sits his gentle Wife, who with him knelt
Long years ago at God's pure altar-place ;
Still beautiful,—though all that she hath felt
Hath calm'd the glory of her radiant face,
And given her brow a holier, softer grace.
MOTHER OF SOULS IMMORTAL, she doth feel
A glow from Heaven her earthly love replace ;
Prayer to her lip more often now doth steal,
And meditative hope her serious eyes reveal.

XXIX.

Fondly familiar is the look she gives
As he returns, who forth so lately went,—
For they *together* pass their happy lives ;
And many a tranquil evening have they spent
Since, blushing, ignorantly innocent,
She vow'd, with downcast eyes and changeful hue,
To love him only. Love fulfill'd hath lent
Its deep repose ; and, when he meets her view,
Her soft look only says,—“ I trust—and I am true.”

XXX.

Scatter'd like flowers, the rosy children play—
Or round her chair a busy crowd they press ;
But, at the FATHER'S coming, start away,
With playful struggle for his loved caress,
And jealous of the one he first may bless.
To each, a welcoming word is fondly said ;
He bends and kisses some ; lifts up the less ;
Admires the little cheek, so round and red,
Or smooths with tender hand the curl'd and shining head.

XXXI.

Oh! let us pause, and gaze upon them now.
Is there not one—beloved and lovely boy!
With Mirth's bright seal upon his open brow,
And sweet fond eyes, brimful of love and joy?
He, whom no measure of delight can cloy,
The daring and the darling of the set ;
He who, though pleased with every passing toy,
Thoughtless and buoyant to excess, could yet
Never a gentle word or kindly deed forget ?

XXXII.

And one, more fragile than the rest, for whom—
As for the weak bird in a crowded nest—
Are needed all the fostering care of home
And the soft comfort of the brooding breast :
One, who hath oft the couch of sickness press'd !
On whom the Mother looks, as it goes by,
With tenderness intense, and fear suppress'd,
While the soft patience of her anxious eye
Blends with "God's will be done,"—"God grant thou
may'st not die!"

XXXIII.

And is there not the elder of the band?
She with the gentle smile and smooth bright hair,
Waiting, some paces back,—content to stand
Till these of Love's caresses have their share ;
Knowing how soon his fond paternal care
Shall seek his violet in her shady nook,—
Patient she stands—demure, and brightly fair—
Copying the meekness of her Mother's look,
And clasping in her hand the favourite story-book.

XXXIV.

Wake, dreamer!—Choose;—to labour Life away,
Which of these little precious ones shall go
(Debarr'd of summer-light and cheerful play)
To that receptacle for dreary woe,
The Factory Mill?—Shall He, in whom the glow
Of Life shines bright, whose free limbs' vigorous tread
Warns us how much of beauty that we know
Would fade, when *he* became dispirited,
And pined with sicken'd heart, and bow'd his fainting
head?

XXXV.

Or shall the little quiet one, whose voice
So rarely mingles in their sounds of glee,
Whose life can bid no living thing rejoice,
But rather is a long anxiety;—
Shall he go forth to toil? and keep the free
Frank boy, whose merry shouts and restless grace
Would leave all eyes that used his face to see
Wistfully gazing towards that vacant space
Which makes their fireside seem a lone and dreary place?

XXXVI.

Or, sparing these, send Her whose simplest words
 Have power to charm,—whose warbled, childish song,
 Fluent and clear and bird-like, strikes the chords
 Of sympathy among the listening throng,—
 Whose spirits light, and steps that dance along,
 Instinctive modesty and grace restrain:
 The fair young innocent who knows no wrong,—
 Whose slender wrists scarce hold the silken skein
 Which the glad Mother winds;—shall *She* endure this
 pain?

XXXVII.

Away! The thought—the *thought* alone brings tears!
 THEY labour—*they*, the darlings of our lives!
 The flowers and sunbeams of our fleeting years;
 From whom alone our happiness derives
 A lasting strength, which every shock survives;
 The green young trees beneath whose arching boughs
 (When failing Energy no longer strives)
 Our wearied age shall find a cool repose;—
 THEY toil in torture!—No—the painful picture close.

XXXVIII.

Ye shudder,—nor behold the vision more !
Oh, Fathers ! is there then one law for these,
And one for the pale children of the Poor,—
That to their agony your hearts can freeze ;
Deny their pain, their toil, their slow disease ;
And deem with false complaining they encroach
Upon your time and thought ? Is yours the Ease
Which misery vainly struggles to approach,
Whirling unthinking by, in Luxury's gilded coach ?

XXXIX.

Examine and decide. Watch through his day
One of these little ones. The sun hath shone
An hour, and by the ruddy morning's ray,
The last and least, he saunters on alone.
See where, still pausing on the threshold stone,
He stands, as loth to lose the bracing wind ;
With wistful wandering glances backward thrown
On all the light and glory left behind,
And sighs to think that HE must darkly be confined !

XL.

Enter with him. The stranger who surveys
The little natives of that dreary place
(Where squalid suffering meets his shrinking gaze),
Used to the glory of a young child's face,
Its changeful light, its colour'd sparkling grace,
(Gleams of Heaven's sunshine on our shadow'd earth!)
Starts at each visage wan, and bold, and base,
Whose smiles have neither innocence nor mirth,—
And comprehends the Sin original from birth.

XLI.

There the pale Orphan, whose unequal strength
Loathes the incessant toil it *must* pursue,
Pines for the cool sweet evening's twilight length,
The sunny play-hour, and the morning's dew :
Worn with its cheerless life's monotonous hue,
Bow'd down, and faint, and stupified it stands ;
Each half-seen object reeling in its view—
While its hot, trembling, languid little hands
Mechanically heed the Task-master's commands.

XLII.

There, sounds of wailing grief and painful blows
Offend the ear, and startle it from rest ;
(While the lungs gasp what air the place bestows ;)
Or misery's joyless vice, the ribald jest,
Breaks the sick silence: staring at the guest
Who comes to view their labour, they beguile
The unwatch'd moment ; whispers half suppress'd
And mutterings low, their faded lips defile,—
While gleams from face to face a strange and sullen smile.

XLIII.

These then are his Companions : he, too young
To share their base and saddening merriment,
Sits by : his little head in silence hung ;
His limbs cramp'd up ; his body weakly bent ;
Toiling obedient, till long hours so spent
Produce Exhaustion's slumber, dull and deep.
The Watcher's stroke,—bold—sudden—violent,—
Urges him from that lethargy of sleep,
And bids him wake to Life,—to labour and to weep !

XLIV.

But the day hath its End. Forth then he hies
With jaded, faltering step, and brow of pain ;
Creeps to that shed,—his HOME,—where happy lies
The sleeping babe that cannot toil for Gain ;
Where his remorseful Mother tempts in vain
With the best portion of their frugal fare :
Too sick to eat—too weary to complain—
He turns him idly from the untasted share,
Slumbering sinks down unfed, and mocks her useless care.

XLV.

Weeping she lifts, and lays his heavy head
(With all a woman's grieving tenderness)
On the hard surface of his narrow bed ;
Bends down to give a sad unfelt caress,
And turns away ;—willing her God to bless,
That, weary as he is, he need not fight
Against that long-enduring bitterness,
The VOLUNTARY LABOUR of the Night,
But sweetly slumber on till day's returning light.

XLVI.

Vain hope! Alas! unable to forget
 The anxious task's long, heavy agonies,
 In broken sleep the victim labours yet!
 Waiting the boding stroke that bids him rise,
 He marks in restless fear each hour that flies—
 Anticipates the unwelcome morning prime—
 And murmuring feebly, with unawaken'd eyes,
 "Mother! Oh Mother! is it yet THE TIME?"
 Starts at the moon's pale ray—or clock's far distant chime.

XLVII.

Such is *his* day and night! Now then return
 Where your OWN slumber in protected ease;
 They whom no blast may pierce, no sun may burn;
 The lovely, on whose cheeks the wandering breeze
 Hath left the rose's hue. Ah! not like these
 Does the pale infant-labourer ask to be:
 He craves no tempting food—no toys to please—
 Not Idleness,—but less of agony;
 Not Wealth,—but comfort, rest, CONTENTED POVERTY.

XLVIII.

There is, among all men, in every clime,
 A difference instinctive and unschool'd :
 God made the MIND unequal. From all time
 By fierceness conquer'd, or by cunning fool'd,
 The World hath had its Rulers and its Ruled :—
 Yea—uncompell'd—men abdicate free choice,
 Fear their own rashness, and, by thinking cool'd,
 Follow the counsel of some trusted voice ;—
 A self-elected sway, wherein their souls rejoice.

XLIX.

Thus, for the most part, willing to obey,
 Men rarely set Authority at naught :
 Albeit a weaker or a worse than they
 May hold the rule with such importance fraught :
 And thus the peasant, from his cradle taught
 That some must *own*, while some must *till* the land,
 Rebels not—murmurs not—even in his thought.
 Born to his lot, he bows to high command,
 And guides the furrowing plough with a contented hand.

L.

But, if the weight which habit renders light
 Is made to gall the Serf who bends below—
 The dog that watch'd and fawn'd, prepares to bite!
 Too rashly strain'd, the cord snaps from the bow—
 Too tightly curb'd, the steeds their riders throw—
 And so, (at first contented his fair state
 Of customary servitude to know,)
 Too harshly ruled, the poor man learns to hate
 And curse the oppressive law that bids him serve the Great.

LI.

THEN first he asks his gloomy soul the CAUSE
 Of his discomfort; suddenly compares—
 Reflects—and with an angry Spirit draws
 The envious line between his lot and theirs,
 Questioning the JUSTICE of the unequal shares;
 And from the gathering of this discontent,
 Where there is strength, REVOLT his standard rears;
 Where there is weakness, evermore finds vent
 The sharp annoying cry of sorrowful complaint.

LII.

Therefore should Mercy, gentle and serene,
Sit by the Ruler's side, and share his Throne :—
Watch with unerring eye the passing scene,
And bend her ear to mark the feeblest groan ;
Lest due Authority be overthrown,
And they that ruled perceive (too late confess'd !)
Permitted Power might still have been their own,
Had they but watch'd that none should be oppress'd—
No just complaint despised—no WRONG left unredress'd.

LIII.

Nor should we, Christians in a Christian land,
Forget who smiled on helpless infancy,
And bless'd them with divinely gentle hand.—
“ Suffer that little children come to me :”
Such were His words to whom we bow the knee !
These to our care the Saviour did commend ;
And shall we His bequest treat carelessly,
Who yet our full protection would extend
To the lone Orphan child left by an Earthly Friend ?

LIV.

No! rather what the Inspired Law imparts
To guide our ways, and make our path more sure;
Blending with Pity (native to our hearts),
Let us to these, who patiently endure
Neglect, and penury, and toil, secure
The innocent hopes that to their age belong:
So, honouring Him, the Merciful and Pure,
Who watches when the Oppressor's arm grows strong,—
And helpeth them to right—the Weak—who suffer wrong!

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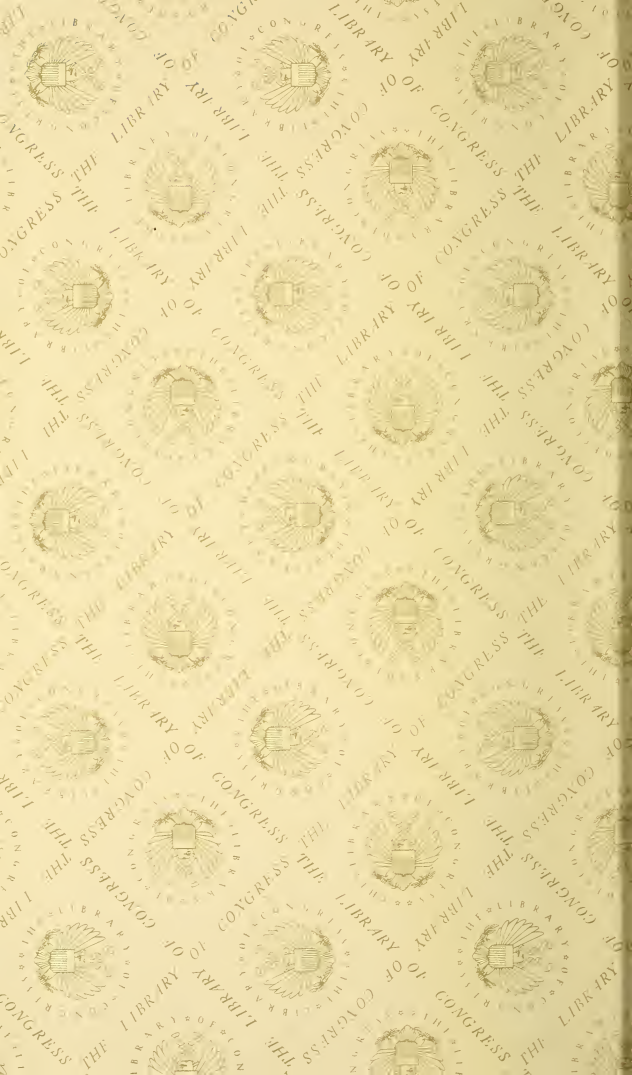
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